HENRY SCOUGAL
AND THE
OXFORD METHODISTS

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T. F. Torrance.

Henry Scougal and the Oxford Methodists

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

JOHN WESLEY AND GEORGE WHITEFIELD IN SCOTLAND;

OR, THE

INFLUENCE OF THE OXFORD METHODISTS ON SCOTTISH RELIGION.

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

Henry Scougal and the Oxford Methodists

or, The Influence of a Religious Teacher of the Scottish Church

BY THE

REV. D. BUTLER, M.A.

ABERNETHY, PERTHSHIRE

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCXCIX

TO

MY WIFE,

I DEDICATE THIS RECORD OF A

SAINTLY LIFE.

INTRODUCTION.

In the preparation of my book on 'Wesley and Whitefield in Scotland,' and the study of the literature, especially the original sources, relating to the development of the Oxford Methodist movement, I was very much impressed with the influence that Henry Scougal of Aberdeen had over the leaders during their formative period. There seemed to be strong reason for the conviction that he had been more of an inspirer and of a creative power over that movement than he has received credit for. After my 'Wesley and Whitefield in Scotland' appeared, the conviction even increased, and further reflection led to closer examination. It then seemed to me that not only did his remarkable book influence them, as is abundantly proved by their own direct evidence in letters and journals—that not

only did his personality help to shape them—but from the published writings, as they were known to the Wesleys, there came forth the testimony that when Scougal was Regent and Professor of Philosophy at King's College, Aberdeen, he was the "perpetual president" of a society at that college which was guided much by the same aims and existed for the same ends as those which formed the ideal of the early Methodist Society at Oxford, that ultimately grew into a great Church and exercised such a deep power, both directly and indirectly, over the Christianity of Great Britain. It seemed to me as more than probable that the idea of the society at Oxford came to Charles Wesley, who was its real founder, from Henry Scougal, and he certainly founded it at the time when he was studying Scougal's works. Both societies were alike academic and religious. Hence this little book, in which I have sought to convey my impression.

I have endeavoured to observe the true historical perspective: to represent Scougal as he appeared to these great saints and teachers from the internal evidence of his own writings, and from Dr Gairden's sermon preached at his death. I have endeavoured to portray the life, teaching, and example of the

Scottish teacher as he shines forth in his own books, by such evidence as I could gather from trustworthy and historical sources, and as he appeared to the Wesleys about 1729.[1] These writings are eminently autobiographical, and reveal the growth of a saintly soul, and of one who wielded power over the piety of former days. In my previous book,[2] I made reference to Scougal's influence both in the text and in a footnote, and a reviewer wrote that from the evidence stated he was sure that the *fons et origo* of Methodism was to be found in Henry Scougal of Aberdeen. That is my conviction, deepened by a study of the original literature as it is preserved in the British Museum, and I have endeavoured to express it in this book. If the case is established, then it is a glory of which the Scottish Church may well be proud, that one of her most saintly teachers, who died at the early age of twenty-eight, has the great honour of shaping and inspiring, during their formative period, saints so eminent, and religious teachers so epoch-making, as John Wesley, Charles Wesley, George

[1] It is to be regretted that John Wesley's Journal does not begin until 1735. What additional interest it would have had, could we possess a record of *each day* from 1726, as we have almost consecutively from 1735.

[2] Pp. 5-11, and pp. 67, 68.

Whitefield, and their associates. Even if the claim made regarding the origin of the Society at Oxford be questioned, Scougal's influence in shaping their thought is beyond doubt, and I have sought in this book to give him what he seems legitimately to deserve.

D. BUTLER.

The Manse,
Abernethy, Perthshire,
October 1899.

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HENRY SCOUGAL.

CHAPTER I.

Henry Scougal was the son of Patrick Scougal, who in 1636 was ordained minister of Dairsie, Fife; in 1645 was translated to Leuchars; in 1659 to Salton, Haddingtonshire; and in 1664 was appointed Bishop of Aberdeen, and held that office until his death in 1682.[1] Keith says he was a man of great worth, and Baillie calls him "a good and subtle scholar." Bishop Burnet, who was his immediate successor at Salton,[2] describes him as "a man of rare temper, great piety, and prudence";[3] and adds in another place, "With a rare humility, tolerance, and contempt of the world, there was

[1] The Scottish Nation, by William Anderson, vol. iii. p. 423.

[2] Ency. Brit. (8th edition).

[3] History of His Own Time, vol. i. p. 217.

combined in him a wonderful strength of judgment, a dexterity in the conduct of affairs, which he employed chiefly in the making up of differences, and a discretion in his whole deportment." [1]

This brief record of the father's life and character enables us to follow the life and inner development of his distinguished son; but it is to be regretted that so little can be known of the mother,[2] who must have had no small share in the religious education of such a remarkable child. She must have been a lady of most saintly character and deep religious conviction, for her son Henry was early imbued with the devotional spirit, and the Christian consciousness instinctively applies the name of saint to him, as he reveals himself in his writings and in his brief but holy life. Henry

[1] Preface to Life of Bishop Bedell.

[2] In the articles on Scougal in the 'Dictionary of National Biography' (vol. li.) it is stated that Henry was born in 1650 (p. 120); and the statement is made (p. 122) that the Bishop was married in 1660 to Ann Congalton, afterwards Lady Gunsgreen, who had three sons and two daughters—Henry being named as the third of the sons. The statement is the same in Dr Scott's 'Fasti' (Part vi. p. 886). But this lady must have been the Bishop's second wife, for the mother of Henry Scougal was Margaret Wemyss, a Fifeshire lady (see Anderson's Scottish Nation, vol. iii. p. 424). On his father's side Henry Scougal was descended from the Scougals of that ilk (Eminent Scotsmen, vol. iv. p. 243).

Scougal is one of those to be placed near Thomas à Kempis, and this study will manifest how potent and far reaching was his influence as a religious teacher. Like Thomas à Kempis and the "friends of God," little is known of the outward details of his life, for we possess no letters. He was one of those who moved more in the region of the inward than of the outward, and his inner life was fed from those unseen rills that have their origin in the city of God. Henry Scougal's best biography is the remarkable book and sermons he has given us; but, fortunately for us, his funeral sermon was preached by a clergyman who possessed a kindred spirit to that of his friend. In that sermon we have a brief but interesting record of Henry Scougal's life, character, and training, as well as the impression his personality made upon his intimate friends. With the help of the few biographical details, as given in encyclopædiæ, and sketches of his career given in editions of his works — but, chiefest of all, with the help of this remarkable sermon — we educe the following sketch. Dr Gairden's[1] impressions are valuable, and are in harmony with those we

[1] George Gairden (1638-1723) was translated from Old Machar in 1683 to the second charge of St Nicholas, Aberdeen. He was

receive from Scougal's book, 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man.'

Childhood and Boyhood.

Henry Scougal was born probably in the manse of Leuchars, Fifeshire, in June 1650; he was fortunate in his parentage, and in the influences of the home where he was born. The early beginnings and first blossoms of his life were "seasoned with pious inclinations,"[1] and one can trace in them the pious influence of his mother.

> "Happy he
> With such a mother! faith in womankind
> Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
> Comes easy to him."

Henry was from his earliest years dedicated to the service of God and the Church, and the influence of his parents with that purpose in view found a helpful ally in the pious inclinations and suitable disposition of the boy's own spirit. He comes before us as a boy taken up little with play and diversions, as retiring in his disposition,

said to have been an accomplished naturalist as well as a distinguished minister (Scott's Fasti, Part vi.)

[1] Sermon, p. 330.

of a staidness of mind, given to private reading of the Scriptures, meditation, and prayer — as withal free from sullenness and dulness of spirit. A trait comes out in this early period, recalling a similar one in John Wesley, who often found help in the difficulties of life by opening his Bible and reading the text or passage where his eyes first alighted. Both were averse to making a "lottery" of Scripture, but both found the habit just indicated helpful. It is told of Henry Scougal, that being in the midst of anxious thought as to his career, he opened his Bible and found a text which decided his career—"By what means shall a young man learn to purify his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word."[1] He learned at an early age the Latin language, and became acquainted with its literature. Like Dr Thomas Chalmers when a boy, he was occasionally found delivering little orations to a company of his associates, and was evidently much impressed with Cicero's speeches to the Conscript Fathers. He possessed a quickness of judgment, a vast memory, which was soon stored by the treasures of Scripture, and a knowledge of the Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Oriental languages, as well as of history, mathe-

[1] Sermon, p. 332.

matics, logic. His youth was penetrated with a deep sense of the vanity and meanness of this world's hurry and designs—"his heart was clear of any inclination to it, and he would even then say to his intimates that, *abstracting from the will of God*, mere curiosity would make him long for another world, it being a tedious thing to see still the same dull play acted over again here."[1]

Henry Scougal was fortunate in his home, and had an opportunity of meeting many remarkable men there. It was surely a privilege for such a boy to have met the saintly Leighton, and to have heard him speak amid the quietness and freedom of a sympathetic home. Leighton was minister of Newbattle in 1641, and was there until 1653, when he was appointed Principal of Edinburgh University. Scougal's father and Leighton were of one mind in matters religious and ecclesiastical, and Leighton was a welcome guest both at Leuchars manse and afterwards at Salton, where Scougal's father was translated in 1659. Leighton, Lawrence Charteris, Robert Douglas, with other such souls, were among those of whom Dr Gairden speaks when he wrote of his friend's boyhood: "Such was the seriousness of his spirit, and the love he even

[1] Pp. 375, 376.

then had for knowledge and good men, that when he had the opportunity of hearing serious and reverend persons who used to resort to his father's house, he was careful to attend to them, and listen to their wise and pious discourses." [1] Such is the brief record of Henry Scougal's childhood and boyhood—fortunate in all respects—a lovely combination of hallowing influences and of a hallowed disposition, capable of assimilating and being strengthened by them.

[1] P. 333.

CHAPTER II.

STUDENT LIFE AT KING'S COLLEGE, ABERDEEN.

His father was appointed Bishop of Aberdeen in 1664, and from Salton to Aberdeen the family removed in that year. Henry Scougal entered King's College at fourteen years of age, and graduated when eighteen.[1] As a student he both manifested a genius for godliness and a genius for learning: from the strifes of the period his soul was as a star, and dwelt apart. He was far removed from the levities, animosities, and habits of the time; he united gravity with a free, magnetic, unaffected manner; he avoided controversy, and cared nothing for the bitter words and subtle distinctions that charac-

[1] In the 'Fasti Aberdonenses' or 'Records of the University and King's College, Aberdeen,' his name appears in the list of students who studied under Dr Robert Forbes in 1664 (p. 481), and among those laureated in 1668 (p. 523).

terised the ecclesiastical strivings of his time; he "wore the white flower of a blameless life," and piety penetrated his learning. We hear of him as being attracted to mathematics and history, besides the other branches of learning that characterised the curriculum of the period; and as avoiding all such false knowledge as depraved the spirit, and had a bad influence over the mind. By private study he mastered the system of Lord Bacon, and one can well trace in him the influence of the great philosopher who abandoned the deductive logic of Aristotle and the schoolmen, and for the interpretation of the world rested on inductive methods: who insisted on the facts that man is the servant and interpreter of nature, that truth is not derived from authority, and that knowledge is the fruit of experience. Lord Bacon's method in science became that of Scougal afterwards in religion, and one can trace throughout his writings a logical conciseness, a clear reasoning and exactness of language, an appeal to experience, and a writing from experience that may have been derived from his philosophic guide. Henry Scougal as a student transcended what Dr Thomas Chalmers named "the olden pertinaciousness and the olden zeal for little things,"[1] and felt, like him, how much

[1] Dr Hanna's Memoirs, vol. i. p. 651.

an earnest devotion of mind to a great object raises the man above petty embarrassments;[1] learning that would give him a right apprehension of God and just thoughts about virtue, morality, and prayer, that would transform his knowledge into inspiration, became his chief quest and the supreme object of his desire. Books that inflamed as well as informed—that imparted heat as well as light—that pointed as "with a single finger to heaven"—were the companions of his quiet hours, and helped to nourish in him a majestic religious repose. While pursuing learning he also pursued, like Dr Norman Macleod's "Earnest Student,"[2] the life that was "hid with Christ in God"; while mindful of his calling on earth, he recalled that it could only be lived aright, in so far as he remembered that it was a heavenly calling.

Another important feature of his college life at Aberdeen which has not had the emphasis given to it that it deserves, was the influence of his example in moulding afterwards the Oxford Methodists. Whitefield distinctly states that Scougal's book led to his conversion: it was given him by Charles Wesley, who regarded it as a companion

[1] Dr Hanna's Memoirs, vol. i. p. 130.

[2] James Mackintosh.

of the higher life. That book, 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man,' was used by all the members of the Oxford club originated by Charles Wesley, and was the text-book of the little society that was afterwards destined to exercise an important and quickening power on the religious life of the country. Of this more afterwards. But not only did Scougal's book influence the religion of these students at Oxford, the example of their teacher seems to have given them the conception of the University Club, which they formed for purely religious purposes, and which received at Oxford the name (given in derision) of Methodist. It is impossible to recall the veneration in which Scougal was held by the Oxford club, of which Charles Wesley was the first, and John Wesley the succeeding, president, and not to see that these Oxford students were following both the *example* as well as the teaching of Scougal in the unfolding of their religious life. John Wesley afterwards found an authority for his societies in the history of the early Church, but the Oxford club originated by Charles Wesley was probably suggested to him by the example of Scougal when a student at Aberdeen. In fact, the prototype of the Oxford club was in Aberdeen, and the religious society at King's

College was in all probability the precursor of the one at Christ Church. To the honour of Henry Scougal's saintly memory this ought to have been known before this, and it is well to note what Dr Gairden in 1678 says of Scougal—a fact known to Charles Wesley. Here are his words: "Religion was the matter of his [Scougal's] serious and impartial choice, and not merely the prejudice of custom and education. He used sometimes to write essays of morality, and occasional meditations; which, as they were singularly eloquent and ingenious, so they breathed forth the devotion of his mind and the seriousness of his spirit, and would very well become a riper age. It being the custom of the youth to have private meetings about the ordering the concerns of their commencements, *where he* [*Scougal*] *was made constant president among his fellows*, his discourses to them were so grave and becoming (as some of them have professed) that they looked upon them as the sayings of a grey head, and thought they savoured of the wisdom of a senator."[1] And so the young gifted Henry Scougal was from 1665-1668 president of a religious society at King's College, Aberdeen, which existed for the same purposes, and was

[1] Sermon, p. 337.

shaped by the same ideal, as afterwards became the outstanding feature of the Methodist Club at Oxford. Surely Scougal was a seventeenth-century "Methodist," if we judge him by the explanation which John Wesley gives in his dictionary of the term — "one who lives according to the method laid down in Holy Scripture." As John Wesley again prepared a book of prayers for his club, so Henry Scougal wrote at the age of eighteen[1] his 'Private Reflections and Occasional Maxims,' with which we shall deal in a succeeding chapter.[2]

[1] See Preface to edition of 1740. [2] Chap. vi.

Note.—These "private meetings" (p. 12) had a twofold object: they were intended to prepare for graduation, but Dr Gairden's narrative renders it beyond doubt that Scougal used them also for ends purely religious. The Aberdeen students in those days lived in college (Prof. Cooper's Introduction, p. 6), and so Scougal had the same opportunity of influencing the students as the Wesleys had at Oxford. Their society had the same twofold object (see p. 101).

CHAPTER III.

REGENT AND PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT KING'S COLLEGE, ABERDEEN.

As John Wesley was for many years Greek Lecturer and Moderator of the classes at Lincoln College, Oxford, with the duties assigned of lecturing on the Greek Testament, teaching Divinity, and presiding over the Daily Disputations held in the College every day except Sunday, so Henry Scougal was for one year Regent and for three years Professor of Philosophy in the University of King's College,[1] with duties assigned somewhat similar.[2] In Dr Gairden's quaint language, "he was thought worthy

[1] Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen, vol. iv. p. 244.

[2] In the 'Fasti Aberdonenses' he is mentioned as a regent in 1669 with thirty-four students, and with two additional ones in the following year (pp. 488, 489). Twelve of his students laureated in 1673 (ibid., p. 526).

to be a master, where he had so lately been a scholar; and, after having given sufficient proofs of his fitness, by teaching for the next term the class of one who was occasionally absent, he was accordingly promoted, and even in this station to him to live was Christ."[1] The claim is made for him as a lecturer in philosophy, that he was the first in Aberdeen or in the nation[2] to teach the Baconian system;[3] and, although the discipline of the class seems for a time to have suffered on account of his youth, his piety and learning called forth the affectionate admiration of the worthy students. The unruly and perverse section

[1] Sermon, p. 338.

[2] Ibid., p. 340.

[3] Sir William Hamilton somewhere observes that every problem of philosophy ultimately becomes a problem of theology; and it is interesting to observe that Scougal's religious teaching, which had experience for its basis, was preceded in his thought by an adoption of Lord Bacon's philosophy. Dr Thomas Chalmers emphasises this aspect of thought in a comparison of Lord Bacon and Bishop Butler: "Butler is in theology what Bacon is in science. The reigning principle of the latter is that it is not for man to theorise on the works of God; and of the former that it is not for man to theorise on the ways of God. Both alike deferred to the certainty of experience as being paramount to all the plausibilities of hypothesis; and he who attentively studies the writings of these great men will find a marvellous concurrence of principle between a sound philosophy and a sound faith" ('Memoirs,' vol. ii. p. 304).

he permitted to be expelled from the class, even although the expulsion involved detriment to his own worldly interests, which had little hold upon his nature. As a regent, he is brought before us as one whose presence and teaching shed a Christ-like atmosphere in the lecture-room: who impressed his students with humility as being the first step to real knowledge, and inspired them with a sense of the worth and dignity of the soul and with an aversion to sensual pleasure. He comes before us as a teacher who took a personal interest in each of his students, making it appear both by teaching and by practice that religion and philosophy are not enemies to each other, that the discreet use of reason leads man to the truths and graces of the Christian religion.[1] On the evenings of the Lord's Day he had prepared for them some discourses, chiefly with an ethical purpose in view, emphasising character as the abiding foundation of knowledge,[2] condemning the folly and heinousness of vice and impiety, and bringing religion and goodness forward as the chief

[1] Sermon, pp. 341, 342.

[2] Dr Gairden specially mentions "that he guarded them against the debauched sentiments of Leviathan" (Sermon, p. 341).

good of life. Carlyle somewhere says: "I call a man remarkable who becomes a true workman in the vineyard of the Highest," and Henry Scougal, during the student and regent period at Aberdeen, as throughout the rest of his brief life, comes before us as one who, judged by such a standard, is worthy to be called "remarkable." He was characterised by accurate learning and genuine piety—a fine combination which must have told pervasively upon his students.

CHAPTER IV.

MINISTER OF AUCHTERLESS.

Scougal, like Leighton, was one of those few men of whom it can be said that while on earth they live in heaven, and bring the atmosphere of heaven nearer earth. Each possessed the same qualities that began to exhibit themselves in childhood, that deepened in youth, blossomed forth with rich fulness in early manhood, and manifested themselves in a saintly ministry. In both one realises the unity of two worlds—the invisible not parallel with the visible, but pervading it with its holiness, sanctifying it with its purity. The power of their ministry was centred in the fact that their life was hid with Christ in God, that it found its hope and its repose amid the eternal things of God.

Bishop Thorold narrates that on his translation

from the see of Rochester to that of Winchester, his successor in office at Rochester asked him for counsel. "Give me," was the request, "one main piece of advice, the outcome of all your experience, as the most important for me to remember." After a pause, Bishop Thorold answered: "This is what I should like to say. All depends upon the personal life and character of the bishop. That is the foundation upon which will rest all which you will be able to do. It is a great but humbling office." [1]

Fra Angelico once said, "He who occupies himself with the things of Christ must ever dwell with Christ"; and if ever a young minister entered his parish with the burden of two such ideals upon his heart, it was surely Henry Scougal; and spirits like his maintain the only possible apostolic succession, for they continue it by incarnating the sweetness and the grace of the Christian life, and by making them present facts in conduct.

Henry Scougal was probably advised by Leighton and others [2] to enter the Church. He was recommended, 26th September 1672, for licence, and ordained in 1673 as minister of the parish of

[1] Life and Work of Bishop Thorold, p. 405.

[2] Dr Gairden says, "By the counsel of some serious and reverend persons in the Church."

Auchterless, Aberdeenshire.[1] His ministry was characterised by a whole-hearted sincerity, a deep consciousness of God and the invisible world, a singular seriousness of purpose. In order to give himself altogether to his ministerial work, he resigned the Chair of Philosophy, which he had held for three years.

From Dr Gairden we can gather together some aspects of his work at Auchterless. He felt his obligations to piety and innocence of life increased by his office; he regularly catechised, and acquired an intimate knowledge of members belonging to his congregation; more than the goodly appearances of others he valued the humble innocence, cheerful contentment, and resignation of one poor woman in his parish. Wishful that the early part of the service conducted by the reader (the invocation of Almighty God, the lessons, the confession of the Christian faith, and rehearsing the Ten Commandments) should be regarded as worship and not as preliminaries to the sermon of the minister, he was present then, and did not, as was the general custom, appear in the church when sermon was about to be given. He revived the use of lectures or continuous exposition of a book of Scripture; he

[1] Fasti, Part vi. p. 650.

strove in his teaching to touch the heart and better the life, and, like Francis de Sales, his manner was evidently characterised by majesty and tenderness. The object of his preaching was the glory of God and the good of men; and that he might realise these, he made his subject the study and prayer of the previous week, that it might thereby pass into his own heart and affect his own spirit first. In his preaching he made frequent recollections of the divine presence, and his manner spoke of real piety and quickened it among his people.

Scougal's conception of pulpit eloquence was an exalted one: to him its aim was twofold — (1) not only to consider the issues of reason, but to impress the spiritual nature with a truth; and (2) to have his own heart *first* imbued with that disposition which he sought to produce in others.

M. Thiers has said that "to give is the noblest mode of using property; it is the moral enjoyment added to the physical." [1] But Scougal, always indifferent to the possessions of time, gave not from the mere sense of the pleasure it gave him so to do, but from the sense of his property being a trust to be used in God's service. Throughout

[1] Quoted by Montalembert, Monks of the West, vol. i. p. 95.

his college career, his professorships, and ministry, he gave away a great part of his income, and in quietness, without letting his name be known. "He chose," says Dr Gairden, "some fit persons both in the city and the country, who were acquainted with the necessities and straits of poor, modest, honest house-keepers, to whom he frequently gave money to relieve their wants. And these were sometimes honest persons of different persuasions, who were relieved in their straits they knew not by whom." [1] Scougal was great in humility, holiness, and happiness, and nothing increased his happiness more than to see the dawn of goodness in those from whom he did not look for it, while it was his joy to lead the dawn to the day. It was during this period that he wrote the book on which his fame permanently rests, the 'Life of God in the Soul of Man,' which may be regarded from its inwardness as his autobiography. In life, character, and literary labour, he closely resembled one of the Oxford band that was so profoundly influenced by his book—the Rev. James Hervey, of Weston-Favel, the literary parish priest, who from within the Church of England last century did so much

[1] Sermon, p. 370.

by his popular books to link Methodism as a religious force to literature, and whose books with Scougal's were so widely read over the country, and did so much to deepen piety. Scougal's book and his life are one in spirit, and his book was published in 1677 for the first time, without his name, and with a preface by Bishop Burnet.[1] The bishop was the first to recognise its spiritual genius, piety, and literary style,[2] and his recognition of this excellence is no small tribute to his own insight. His memory will be gratefully treasured both for the 'History of His Own Time,' so valuable for the period, and for his friendship with the saintly Archbishop Leighton and his

[1] Scottish Biographical Dictionary, p. 243; also Chalmers's General Biographical Dictionary, vol. xxvii. p. 288.

[2] Burnet had been successor to Bishop Scougal in the parish of Salton, and was minister there from 1665 to 1670. Although he afterwards attained the highest eminence, he always retained an affectionate remembrance of his early parish. At his death he bequeathed twenty thousand merks for the benefit of the parish, but chiefly for clothing and educating thirty poor children and in relieving the necessities of the parochial poor. The children who continued to reap the fruits of his bounty were popularly called "bishops," and occupied in the church a gallery which bore the name of the bishop's loft. See Anderson's Scottish Nation, vol. i. p. 490.

saintly pupil, Henry Scougal. It was said of Tauler, one of the "friends of God," that "the Spirit of God breathed through him as sweet music through a lute," and the same can be said of each of these Scottish splendours. The divine harmony reached this world through them both.

CHAPTER V.

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN KING'S COLLEGE, ABERDEEN.

A YEAR after his ordination at Auchterless, Scougal was chosen unanimously by the clergy of the diocese to fill the Chair of Theology in King's College, a position which he occupied until his premature death in 1678. This chair had been shortly before filled by the celebrated John Forbes of Corse, and more lately by William Douglas, the learned author of 'Academiarum Vindiciæ' and other eminent works.[1] Scougal's appointment was universally acceptable, and in accordance with the custom of the time he published a thesis on his accession to the chair, entitled 'De objecto cultus religiosi.' He hesitated in accepting the appointment, but gave way to the pressure of his friends. He gave to his

[1] Eminent Scotsmen, vol. iv. p. 244.

new office the whole-hearted sincerity that characterised his ministry and student life, and several aspects of his work are preserved for us which reveal the same lofty spirit. He learned a Western language in a few days, and as Leighton could write elegant classical French, so his pupil before long attained the same culture. He did not only read books, but thought them until their truth became inspiration to him. He regarded too much reading as dulling, confusing, and "prejudicating" man's mind; and he united with his reading the impulse and impact of friendship, associating with many, especially like-minded friends, and benefiting others and himself by conversation, improved afterwards by retired meditation and devotion. Thus was his learning made inspiration, and thus did he strengthen himself by the atmosphere of a university town.

Scougal again seems to have benefited from Leighton's experience — probably from his suggestion. Leighton was educated at Edinburgh University, where he took his degree in 1631; but he was subsequently sent by his parents to Douay,[1] a town eighteen miles south of Lille in France, and remarkable for the number of its literary and

[1] Anderson's Scottish Nation, vol. ii. p. 643.

scientific institutions, and for its university founded in 1562.[1] He there formed an intimacy with the best educated of the Roman Catholic gentlemen who were attending the college; and being fond of understanding systems different from his own, and of coming into contact with men of worth in other Churches than his own, he learned to love them in Christian charity for the goodness they possessed, and thought less rigidly of the differences that separated them.[2] This must have intensified the natural catholicity of his mind; and as Leighton maintained such friendships throughout life,[3] and visited the Continent at intervals of work, he must have found it helpful to him. Scougal, invalid and all as he was, did likewise, and

[1] Ency. Brit., vol. vii. p. 375.

[2] Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen, vol. iii. p. 378.

[3] Leighton is said at his early and subsequent visits to have had a good deal of intercourse with some members of the Jansenist party, and was impressed by their piety (Ency. Brit. article, p. 427). Both Leighton and Scougal were evidently influenced by teachers of the Pietists, Quietists, as well as the Jansenists on the Continent. Dr John Forbes was at French and other universities; likewise Burnet, Spottiswood, and Patrick Young (Burton's Scot Abroad, p. 293). King's College, Aberdeen, was constructed on the model of that of Paris (ibid., p. 166). The connection is not without interest during this period.

"employed two summers in going to a neighbouring nation,"[1] not unlikely to the very haunts of Leighton. This contact with thoughts, beliefs, and systems different from his own must have helped to raise him above national insularity, and to give him that larger catholicity of heart and mind which certainly did not characterise his period. It helped his natural disposition to attach less weight to the local and contingent than to the universal and abiding; it taught the transitoriness of custom, and the permanence of the spiritual in religion.

Leighton was once reprimanded by zealots at a synod meeting for not "preaching up the times." "Who," he asked, "does preach up the times?" It was answered that all the brethren did it. "Then," he rejoined, "if all of you preach up the times, you may surely allow one poor brother to preach up Christ Jesus and eternity."[2] The words expressed the spirit of both Leighton and Scougal,—embodied the ideal which they shaped for themselves amid their troublous times. Both lived in the eternals, and, living time as eternity, were saved from the narrowing, ecclesiastical strifes of the period — were in them but not of them.

[1] Gairden's Sermons, p. 352.

[2] Pearson's Life of Leighton, p. 9.

Both sought to look at their time-problems from the atmosphere which they breathed, the ideal that became theirs from communion with God; both were thus saved from giving to the phenomenal that importance which was due to the spiritual, and both sought from their position to help their age by concentrating its spiritual consciousness on the calming, elevating truths of religion, and thereby giving to questions of polity the secondary position in the kingdom of God. The spiritual and not the ecclesiastical was to them the real, and their attitude to questions of Church government was that of comprehension— of including in a wide polity all that were willing to be included. By drawing men more towards the centre of things, — by bringing them nearer the deeper unity that dissolved differences or reconciled differences, — by pleading for a catholicity of spirit that of itself put other questions in a secondary position, — they both sought a balm for the ecclesiastical strivings of their age. Leighton and Scougal stand out as teachers to whom the term catholic can truly be applied; both master and pupil were witnesses in the seventeenth century to the eternal in religion, and it is this that makes them both priceless

possessions to the Church. It is, too, not without importance, that both treasured this spirit by communion with men living under different fellowships from their own, and finding thereby an underlying similarity of devotion that transcended all outward distinctions. Over all secondary questions that divided men, Scougal, like Leighton,[1] would say in the words of the Master, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." And, during his professorship at Aberdeen, Scougal is brought before us as one who sought to heal the ecclesiastical differences of parties by bringing them together in a bond of friendship, and by producing a pious temper or disposition opposed to faction, led them to understand each other, and to work for the same spirit in others. Clearly does his friend Dr Gairden see in this the abiding solution of things, and a similarity to the method by which the Son of God spread

[1] The following reference to Leighton is to be found in Scougal's published writings: "An eminent and holy person yet alive in our Church said, 'he would rather be instrumental in persuading one man to be serious in religion, than the whole nation to be Conformists.'" The following is in Dr Gairden's Sermon on Scougal: "A great light of this nation used to say, that the most edifying way was to have long texts and short sermons" (p. 66)—Archbishop Leighton: a Short Biography, by William Blair, D.D., Dunblane.

His religion in the world, by which the zeal and piety of His first followers did continue it, and by which we can expect to see the life and spirit of it breathe once more among us.[1] Henry Scougal was not even by necessity a polemic, and his effort to unite those separated by names and parties, and bring them together in the religion of the Master, is in accordance with the true spirit of Protestantism, for "a Church which does not claim to be infallible is bound to allow that some part of the truth may possibly be with its adversaries."[2]

Such was Scougal's aim both in the general society of Aberdeen and in his classroom. With regard to his lectures, we are not without information. He inspired his students with a twofold aim, the service of Jesus Christ and the good of His Church. He taught the direct objects of the ministry to be the rescuing of the vicious, the inculcation of the practice of religion, and the preparation of souls for the vision of God in eternity. A knowledge of controversies was regarded as useful only as explaining the grounds of the divisions of Christendom, for their own

[1] Sermon, p. 375.

[2] Bryce's Holy Roman Empire, p. 332.

instruction and for the special needs of any who might require it. The following is his friend's narrative: "He proposed two designs as the subject of all his public exercises. The one, *de cura pastorali*, proposing to consider the institution and dignity, the weight and difficulty, the necessity and usefulness, of the holy function of the ministry; the nature of the call we ought to have to it, the necessary dispositions that are required to fit us for it, the manner of our own private life and conversation in it, and how we ought to discharge the several exercises of it, both public and private. The other, the instructing them in casuistical divinity; the considering how a man of a straight conscience ought to behave himself in whatever state or condition of life he be, and whatever cases and circumstances he fall into; and the branching out this into particulars, and vindicating it from the corruption of the Jesuits and others. So great and good were the designs he proposed unto himself as to matters of controversy, he studied rather to lessen than to multiply, and saw that men were apter to be reasoned out of their erroneous persuasions by a good life than many arguments. He thought it enough to make the youth understand the true state of matters

in debate, and to consider the most weighty differences; but he was careful to take them off as much as possible from the disputing humour, and an itch of wrangling *pro* and *con* about anything, and many times by silence answered their impertinent quibbles. There were no debates he was more cautious to meddle with than those about the decrees of God, being sensible how much Christianity had suffered by men diving into things beyond their reach: "secret things belonging to the Lord, and things revealed, to us and our children." But he had always a deep sense of the powerful efficacy of God's grace upon our souls, and that all our good was entirely to be ascribed to God, and all our evil unto ourselves. He used once a year (when the youth were most frequent), by a very serious and affectionate discourse in English, to lay before them the weight and importance of the ministry: how they should demean themselves now while they were candidates for that holy function; how carefully they ought to avoid all such evil conversation as might give their minds a bad tincture; what course of study they ought to take; inviting them to a frequent resort unto him, and expressing a most affectionate concern for them. It was also his great care to

make his private conversation with them as useful as his public. And by this, indeed, he hoped to do most good. They had always free access to him, and his counsels and advices were still suited to the dispositions he perceived in them. He could so modestly and prudently tell them their failings, as to make them perceive and amend them without being offended. He was careful to lend and direct them to the use of good books; and, indeed, one of the great ends of his buying so many was to serve them. Those who were of the most eminent endowments and best inclinations, he stirred up to serious thoughts of the holy ministry. He gave them the most undoubted proofs of his love and care of them, opened his heart freely to them, and learned their inclinations and studies. He directed them to the best means of bettering their heart, as well as informing their judgments: prayer, meditation, and frequent retirements; and made them sensible that self-will was the root of all our sin, and an entire resignation to the will of God the very spring of all our duty, and directed them to frequent and constant acts of self-denial and resignation. And as he was thus careful of his charge, so also of maintaining that entire correspondence with and due deference and respect that

he owed towards his reverend colleague; and that entire and constant love and harmony between them, and that mutually deserved esteem they had for one another was very singular and very exemplary. Thus to him to live was Christ."[1]

The same writer continues: "Thus faithfully and prudently did our dear friend manage his charge in serving the interest of his blessed Master. And we might have hoped confidently, ere long, that, by their joint-endeavours, through the blessing of the Almighty, *we should have seen another face on our Church.* But, amidst all his pious designs and cares, he is called by his great Master, in an hour that we thought not of, from his stewardship here, to an higher employment in the other world. 'Who is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord makes ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth he will make him ruler over all that he hath.'"[2]

Henry Scougal died of consumption at the premature age of twenty-eight, and was buried in the University Chapel at King's College. He was unmarried. Men felt that a light was taken

[1] Sermon, pp. 354-358. [2] Ibid., p. 358.

from among them, and his monument in the University has an inscription with the words that so well express his character, "Cæli avidus et cælo maturus" ("Eager for heaven, and prepared for heaven"). If life is not to be measured by years, but by intensity of thought and life and devotion; if the longest life is not the best, but that which is most of all devoted to the service of God; if that which lives time as eternity, and brings eternity into time, is the most useful for the world,—then Henry Scougal's name may well be enrolled in the Calendar of the Saints. His wasting sickness was borne as a Christian hero alone could do. "Indeed," says Dr Gairden, "the end of his life was no less Christ's than the beginning and whole course of it. The time of his sickness was as cheerfully spent in suffering the will of God as the former was in doing it. He manifested the greatest meekness and cheerfulness of spirit throughout the whole course of it. He used not the least harsh expression, either to any of those that waited on him, or concerning the present providence. He expressed a perfect indifferency as to life and death, and an entire resignation to the will of God, to dispose of him as He thought meet. He found himself never more sensible of the vanity of this

world, nor ever felt more ardent acts of love to God, than at that time. He was rapt in admiration of God's goodness to him, and the little returns he said he had made to it; and acknowledged his own great unworthiness, and his humble confidence in the mercy and goodness of God, through the merits of his blessed Saviour. And thus meekly did he pass his sickness, and resign his spirit, without any trouble from the world, or great pain of body, or any anguish of mind; for 'mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.'"[1]

His lectures were not published, but he left several manuscripts in Latin, particularly "A Short System of Ethics or Moral Philosophy—a Preservative against the Artifices of the Romish Missionaries"; an unfinished treatise 'On the Pastoral Care'; 'Occasional Meditations,' which were not published until 1740. For the Cathedral of Aberdeen, where he was precentor[2] during his incumbency at Auchterless, he prepared a "Morning and Evening Service," which will be found printed

[1] Sermon, p. 359.

[2] A canon appointed by the dean and chapter to regulate the musical services and ritual (Glossary of Ecclesiastical Terms, p. 370).

in the 'History of Aberdeen' by William Orem, town-clerk.[1] Its spirit is felt in the following petition, which forms part of it: "Let the life of the Holy Jesus be always in our thoughts and before our eyes, that, being in love with all those excellent graces which shined in His blessed soul, we may never cease our endeavours till the image of our Lord and Saviour be fully formed within our hearts."[2] He bequeathed his library to King's College, with five thousand merks to increase the salary of the Professor of Divinity in that college. A portrait of Scougal is preserved in the College Hall, and has been engraved in Pinkerton's 'Iconographia.'[3] He was interred in the College Chapel on the north side, opposite to the high altar, now called the bishop's seat or desk.[4]

Such is the brief record of Henry Scougal's life, work, and character; but as the thesis of this book is both to show the influence of his teaching and life over the Oxford Methodists, it is well to record other traits as they are brought before us by his intimate friend Dr Gairden.

[1] Bibliotheca Topographia Britannica, Part iii. (In Edinburgh Library copy, vol. vi. pp. 180-189.)

[2] Ibid., p. 186. [3] Anderson's Scottish Nation, p. 424.

[4] Orem's History of Aberdeen, p. 178.

"All the harm he could do his enemies (if there were any such universal haters of mankind as to do him bad offices) was to pray for them the more earnestly to God."[1]

"He did not confine his charity within a sect or party, but loved goodness wherever he found it; and entertained no harsh thoughts of men, merely upon their differing from him in this or that opinion. He was grieved at the distractions and divisions of the Church, and that religion, the bond of love, should be made so much the bone of contentions."[2]

"What wise methods had he to make his friends sensible of their infirmities and failings by speaking to them of his own! and to stir them up to zeal and diligence in piety and good works, and to the use of the most effectual means for purifying their souls, by telling them instances of the piety and life of others of his acquaintances."[3]

The impression he gave his intimate friends was that of inward purity and elevation above the worldly spirit. There was about him "a great unconcernedness for this present world, it having been the general observation of all that knew him. He looked, indeed, always as a stranger and pil-

[1] Sermon, p. 365. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., p. 367.

grim in it, and was dead to it in heart and spirit long before his body had taken leave of it. Good God! what a deep sense had he of the meanness and vanity of this world's hurry and designs, which he used to say looked to him like the projects and scuffle of children and fools. In his very youth his heart was clear of any inclination to it; and he would even then say to his intimates that, abstracting from the will of God, mere curiosity would make him long for another world, it being a tedious thing to see still the same dull play acted over again here."[1] He was simple in his food: "while he supported nature he scarce suffered his taste to have any complacency in them [the actions of the animal life]. He thought it strange to see those who pretended to a Christian temperance exercising such voluptuous pleasure in their meals, making them the subject of their table-talk, and, as if they owned their bellies for their gods, professing they loved such and such dishes with all their souls. Alas! that the weakness and infirmity of human nature, by which we are levelled with the beasts, should become the matter of our vanity and voluptuousness, instead of that humble and debasing sense we ought to have of ourselves."[2]

[1] Sermon, pp. 375, 376. [2] Ibid., pp. 376, 377.

He comes before us as one "wearing the white flower of a blameless life," but also enduring hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and maintaining in the midst of it serenity of spirit. "When he lived in the country [at Auchterless], the hardships and inconveniences he then endured were the common talk of all that knew him: his coarse fare, and hard lodgings, and unwonted solitude; the extreme coldness of the season, and the comfortless shelters he had against it, did excite the compassion of others, but never lessened the quiet and contentedness of his spirit; and he suffered them with as much patience *as if he had been bred up from his infancy in the Turkish galleys.* Any traverses that befell him in the circumstances of his life and designs did never becloud the natural serenity and cheerfulness of his mind, and he used to say in relation to such discontents, that as he blessed God he was not naturally melancholy, so he *thought an acquired melancholy was scandalous in a clergyman.*"[1]

The Christian religion has united two features in the spiritual consciousness of its disciples—loveliness

[1] Sermon, pp. 378, 379. Compare a similar assertion of Francis de Sales, "He who complains, sins" ("Qui se plaint, pèche") (The Spirit of Francis de Sales, p. 97).

and serenity of character with lowliness of heart. It is difficult to say which is the more attractive, but combined as they are in Christian experience, they form a beautiful unity. It has been pointed out that for his moral life the pagan was referred wholly to himself; that this is the reason why there was no virtue in which the heathen world was so deficient as humility; that it was utterly incomprehensible to a Greek or Roman, for such virtues as he possessed were self-acquired, without divine aid.[1] In opposition to this, Christian faith, we may say, penetrates the soul of the disciple with the life of God, gives him a dominion over sin, with a motive-power to live a holy life, and yet it brings him face to face, heart to heart, with an ideal that is beyond all possibility of full embodiment here, that is ever before all attainment, that while being realised is beyond all realisation, that towers beyond the fulfilment of the greatest saint in the pure calm light of God. Such is a feature that comes out in the lives of all the saints, making all times and all countries one; and in all their letters and autobiographies the experience of St Paul is in some measure manifested: "I knew a

[1] Dr Gerhard Ullhorn's Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism, p. 144.

man in Christ above fourteen years ago, . . . such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities."[1] The vision always brings the sense of unworthiness, and we find this in John Wesley, who averred that he laid the foundation of his work in judging and condemning himself.[2] Henry Scougal was possessed too with a profound sense of humility: "The admiration of the perfection of the Almighty, in the contemplation of which he was often taken up, had sunk him into truly mean thoughts of himself.[3] . . . With what seriousness and simplicity did this enlightened soul express the sense he had of the sinfulness of his nature, and the worthlessness of his person. Almost the very last words he spoke were to this purpose, uttered with an extraordinary devotion of spirit, after having witnessed his resignation to the will of God, and his humble hopes in His mercy and goodness; 'But,' says he, 'when you have the

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 2-5. [2] Works, vol. viii. p. 321.
[3] Sermon, p. 379.

charity to remember me in your prayers, do not think me a better man than I am; but look upon me, as indeed I am, a miserable sinner, a most miserable sinner.'"[1]

This is surely interesting from one whose life was the Gospel carried into practice, and regarded as such by his intimate friends and fellow-townsmen. Dr Gairden's sermon was preached to the community amid which Scougal lived, and by which his life and character were well known, and he verifies the truth of his narrative by saying: "I hope there are none here will think me guilty of so much imprudence as to utter falsehoods of him in a place where he was so well known, and where there are so many well acquainted with most of the important and private passages of his life. No. I know you are sensible how far short all I have said comes of his true worth. He had need to be endowed with the same spirit that would speak aright of him; and true goodness cannot be expressed, but felt."[2]

Another characteristic of Scougal's character is one that has appeared in the lives of many saintly men—*e.g.*, Luther, Wesley, Kingsley, and Chalmers—his love for the society of children. "The exem-

[1] Sermon, pp. 381, 382. [2] Ibid., p. 382.

plary regard he had to young children was equally the expression of his humility and his love. How ready was he on all occasions to converse with them, taking a singular delight in their harmless innocence, and usually, after the manner of the great master of love, affectionately embracing and blessing them." [1]

Such is the record of a short and saintly life, and it is always good to be brought into contact with such. From its largeness comes something that raises above smallness; from its greatness flows imperceptibly but pervasively a something that ennobles the common day, and condemns the littleness into which its duties are apt to glide. Such a life gives a higher point of view, a firmer grasp of the invisible realities, an elevation above pettiness, and a glimpse into the wondrous possibilities of the human soul, when it is consecrated to and by God. A life like Scougal's is the direct gift of God to His Church, and imparts to it new impulse and inspiration for service.

It is a permanent emotion in man's nature to admire what is lovely and spiritual in character, and no lapse of time or change of tradition can outgrow this eternal instinct in the human heart. A saint

[1] Dr Gairden's Sermon, pp. 379, 380.

stirs instincts in the human breast which all men know to be among their purest and their best, and man will never withhold reverence from one who bears "the marks of the Lord Jesus." Scougal's life glorifies human nature, and his devotion aroused others—we will shortly see most intensely—who awakened in turn the multitudes, and quickened their dormant energies. His heaven-lit love, enlarging itself by the discipline of self-denial, was the secret of his power, and pointed to its source in God. And it is not without interest to observe that this young Aberdeen professor, who made experience the basis of his teaching, and testified of the indwelling God, consciously known by a manifested life—was first of all a character of rare elevation and spirituality. Experience is the best interpreter in religion ("pectus facit theologum"); but experience gives insight in proportion to the purity and spirituality of him who experiences it. Here was the uniqueness of the gifted Henry Scougal, and his writings everywhere bear witness to a learned and accomplished mind, but not least of all to an intensely beautiful soul. His classical and patristic learning was great, but greater far was that which he derived from sitting before the Heavenly Master as a childlike, submissive disciple.

In his case the promise was verified: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine"; from him, as from Leighton, the truth can be learned that a Christ-like character is the best interpreter of Christian truth.

His early death, relieved, softened, and illuminated by faith in God, is another example of the truth expressed by Dr Walter Smith, and loved by Bishop Ewing[1]:—

> "But all through life I see a Cross,
> Where sons of God yield up their breath;
> There is no gain except by loss,
> There is no life except by death.
> There is no vision but by Faith,
> No glory but by bearing shame,
> Nor justice but by taking blame:
> And that Eternal Passion saith,
> Be emptied of glory, and right and name."[2]

The short life here, led to nobler service in larger worlds than this; but what it learned in the discipline of pain passed into other lives, and enriched them. If it be true of the larger plane of Church history, as has been averred, that the light of an active religion is always burning somewhere, that

[1] Ross' Life of Bishop Ewing, p. 577.
[2] Olrig Grange, p. 202.

the inevitable tendency is for that light to die away in one place and reappear in another,[1] it is also true in the succession of spiritual teachers. One man utters the message and passes away, but the message does not die: it is transmitted by the potent influence it has borne over other souls. And Henry Scougal's life and teaching not only deepened the piety of Scotland, but became also impulse, light, life in Oxford. They entered as formative influences into the young band of earnest souls known as the Oxford Methodists; they shaped them for the work that ultimately produced the religious movement historically known as Methodism; they also quickened the revival of religion over the country. God fulfils Himself in many ways, here and hereafter; and His faithful servant was honoured by the work his short service on earth achieved, for it issued in the most living, spiritual force throughout the subsequent period. God's greatest gift is a consecrated soul, and, as we unite with Bishop Andrewes in his prayer "for the Catholic Church, its establishment and increase: for the Eastern, its deliverance and union; for the Western, its adjustment and peace; for the British, the supply of what is wanting in it, the strengthen-

[1] See Spectator, July 15, 1899, p. 80.

ing of that which remains in it,"[1] we also realise that the answer to such petitions is to be found in God's gifts to all of saintly disciples. Whether they appear as leaders directing the spiritual life and controlling the policy of the Church, or as obscure, silent forces helping the Church in their quiet walk, by incarnating the Christ-spirit, they are in both cases the true fulfilment of the prayer, as well as the supreme need of all time.

[1] Pascal and other Sermons, by Dean Church, p. 92.

CHAPTER VI.

EARLY WRITINGS.

To write an adequate biography of Henry Scougal is an impossibility; to attempt it is to realise, as was said of another, that it is "like writing the history of a fragrance."[1] His influence can be best felt, and such a life as his was one necessarily lived apart: it had a genius for godliness, but not one for affairs. He was one of those born good, who have goodness in their blood; but the leading of his life manifests the unfolding of his inner wealth, and writings are still extant in which we can trace his growth. Scougal was fortunate in his home and friends, fortunate also in his inborn capacity, and the chief influence that shaped him was a study of the Bible, and of the literature that breathed the

[1] Professor Smith's Life of Henry Drummond, p. 12.

spirit of the Bible. Coleridge has said that "an intense study of the Bible will keep any writer from being vulgar in point of style," [1] and Scougal's simple, impressive style as well as his thought were moulded by this book. It quickened, deepened, and intensified a natural direction, and transformed a capacity into a fulfilment.

The 'Life of God in the Soul of Man' was published by Bishop Burnet, and was written by Scougal at the early age of twenty-six or twenty-seven. It is on that book his fame will permanently rest, and viewed both from the standpoint of thought and style, it is worthy to sustain it. But there is an earlier production, written at the age of eighteen, although not published till after his death, that is interesting in the study of his development, and manifests the growth that had been going on within his mind from the earliest years. Scougal, we have already seen, was president of a religious society in King's College, and it was most probably for this society that the 'Private Reflections and Occasional Maxims' were prepared. They manifest him as a student, careful in his philosophic studies, but not unmindful of that larger life within —the life "hid with Christ in God." They do not

[1] Table Talk, p. 100.

contain the same richness or depth of thought as his later work, but they bring us to the little stream that deepened and expanded into the broad river. We have first to do with Henry Scougal as the president of the religious society, and, although the details of its constitution and rules no longer survive, it is possible to aver that its object was a purely spiritual one—the cultivation among the students of personal religion. The following selections from the now-forgotten volume will best manifest its aim.

Contempt of Sensual Pleasures.

"Now for the enjoyments which only tickle the senses with a short and ignoble delight, and withal do clog and dull the soul, many times leaving it in a melancholy mood. I think any considering man will score them out, and put them from competition. There is indeed a certain gradation of the senses, wherein from the touch, the object whereof is most gross and palpable, we may, as it were by steps, ascend to the height, which is more pure, and hath a greater analogy with the intellectual faculty; and it is not unworthy of our observation, that the purest and sublimest sense is

always seated in the highest parts of the human body."

Deceitfulness of Riches.

"The next design (besides sensual pleasures) that puts in for happiness is riches, which we must consider in themselves or with relation to us, and so attending their intents. Under the first consideration, their claim is but weak: for why should a man be happy because his coffers enclose some money, whereof I am as much master as himself; if *justice* restrain me from meddling with it, *avarice* doth not less bind up the supposed owner's hands. If we take riches in the second consideration, then they resign their claim in favour of those interests which they are designed to promote; if they be intended for sensual pleasure, that is already discarded; if for ambition, of that anon. And by the way, it may be noted that riches cannot be used but by alienation, and so they never profit the owner until they be another's; and if we seriously consider, we shall find that the rich man enjoys no more than his own entertainment, and the pains of dispensing the rest to others; a little will supply the personal necessities, even of the most luxuriant, and what is over must be spent on

his domestics, whom he must serve in the quality of a steward; and if they be numerous (as a great estate will require) he finds it a greater business to see to their provision and carriage than they find it to attend him."[1]

The Vanity of Glory.

"The consciences of men are not so debauched but that they may have some reverence for virtue in others, though void of it themselves; and therefore he who would approve himself to the opinion of the greatest part, must shun all palpable enormities. . . . I must needs confess, I have never been so nearly touched with the sharpest reproof as I have been by the undeserved applause of others, when my conscience told me how far I came short of their good opinion. . . . *Amor patriæ* in the heathen was joined to *laudisque immensa cupido.* . . . I think it is no solid happiness which depends on the variable thoughts of a multitude."[2]

Object of Desires an Infinite Being.

"The object of human bliss is somewhat above nature, the enjoyment whereof shall answer or

[1] Essay on Happiness, pp. 24, 25. [2] Ibid., p. 26.

exceed the expectation of his soul, and so fill all the corners of it, that there shall be no more room for future desires; and that this must be an infinite being may appear from our boundless desires."[1]

"What doth the world afford us but anxiety in projects, vanity in enjoyments, and vexation in disappointment?[2] . . . O Lord, Thou alone knowest the present discomposure of my spirit: rebuke, I beseech Thee, the furious tempest, and restore my soul to that calmness and tranquillity which may capacitate me for the duties of Thy service and my calling. . . . Make me taste of the joys that are at Thy right hand, and the pleasures which endure for evermore."[3]

References to Greek Philosophy.

"Doubtless the Stoics shot at rovers when they prescribed an apathy as the only felicity of man."[4] "Platonism in morality answereth to charity in Christianity."[5]

[1] Essays, p. 29. [2] Ibid., p. 5. [3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., p. 10. [5] Ibid., p. 29.

The Advantages of Divine Love.

"Man's duty and happiness consist in the right placing of his love, and this noble affection can have no such suitable, no such adequate object as God. Love is the only thing which may be called ours; any other thing may be taken from us without our consent, but none can ravish our love: if, therefore, we would offer anything to God, let us do it of that which is our own, and if anything can be counted our own, it will follow as an appendix to that gift. He that giveth his love, giveth with it all that he hath, in so far as he giveth his will by which he possesseth all things, and it is not possible to refuse him anything to whom by love we have given our souls; nay, since it is the privilege of gifts to take the value from the giver, and not to be measured by that event, but by the desire, he who loveth may be reckoned not only to give what he hath, but everything else which may make the beloved person happy.

"In which sense it is, that one makes bold to say, that he who loveth God, doth give God to himself, by the complacency he takes in his happiness and perfections. But though this seem too big an

expression, certainly love is the worthiest thing we can give or offer to God, and there is none can so well deserve it.

"When this affection is misplaced, it doth often vent itself in such expressions as do point at its genuine and proper object, and insinuate where it ought to be fixed: the flattering and almost blasphemous terms of admiration wherewith lovers court one another are the language of that affection which was made and designed for God. As he who is accustomed to speak to some great person doth perhaps unawares accost another with the same titles he is wont to give him, so love, which was born to converse with God, being drawn from Him, doth bestow His honour another way. In a word, that affection which calleth its object a deity ought to have been placed on Him who really is so: the excess and violence of his passion ought to be placed where it cannot be excessive. And indeed so large and unbounded is its nature, that it needs be extremely hampered and ill accommodate in any creature: everything is so straight for it, but an infinite goodness; hence ariseth that vexation and disquiet which accompany love, when it is not filled with an object, to answer the vastness of its capacity, hence it is

that lovers do hardly brook a rival, and cannot endure that any should approve their action by imitating it: they know the narrowness of the goodness which they love, that it cannot suffice two, being indeed too narrow for one. The love of God is free of gall; it regrateth nothing so much as the want of rivals: love is the king of self-dereliction, a wandering out of ourselves, a voluntary death, wherein the lover dieth to himself and all his own interest, not thinking of them or caring for them any more, and so perisheth altogether, unless he meeteth with reciprocal affection, for then he is revived, recovers a new life, and liveth in the soul and care of the person whom he loves; nay, now he begins to mind his own concernment, not because they are his, but because the beloved person is pleased to have an interest in them; he becomes dear to himself, because he is dear to the other; but he perisheth quite who loveth one who either cannot or will not answer his affection. Thus do they utter their own utter ruin, who doat on their own fellow-creature, who may chance to neglect or despise their affection, or whose death may put an end to all their endearments. But happy he who hath lost himself in divine love, where he can never miss reciprocal kindness, for

who shall separate in form that love of God whose beginning and goodness are equally eternal?

"They who have made an exchange of hearts by love, get thereby an interest in one another's happiness and misery; this makes love a troublesome passion, when placed on earth, where the most fortunate person hath grief enough to mar the tranquillity of his friend; and it is hard to hold out when we are attacked on all hands, and suffer not only in our own person but in another's. If God be the object of our love, we share in an infinite happiness, without any mixture or possibility of diminution: we rejoice to behold the glory of God, and receive comfort and pleasure from all the praises wherewith men and angels adore Him: it delights us beyond expression to consider that He whom our soul loveth is infinitely happy in Himself, and that all His enemies cannot shake or unmake His throne.

"Nothing doth more naturally beget affection in us than the love of another: either because having a good opinion of ourselves, we account him a lover of goodness, and therefore a lover of goodness who loves us; or because the likeness in disposition which wrought affection in one effecteth the same in the other; or because the lover doth require his own image in his own soul, and every one loveth his own

where he seeth it; or lastly because of the gift which the lover makes of himself to the beloved person, who thereby is moved to love that which now is become his own." [1]

Such are remarkable views of religion and life for a lad of eighteen years: they reveal a soul that at an early period had trampled vulgar ambitions in the dust, and had chosen the better part. They are interesting not least of all as illustrating the development of the author's thought; for the position arrived at, that the infinite desires of the human heart demand an infinite object to rest upon, was by experience ripened into the riper thought—that the human soul can transcend its finite conditions and enter here and now into the life of God—that it can become the participator of a life that is not of this world, but immortal and divine—that has neither this world as its source nor goal—that is nothing else than the Life of God, throbbing and pulsing within it. Such, briefly expressed, seems to be the later faith to which the earlier one led, and with it we will deal in the next chapter.

[1] Essays, pp. 33-35.

CHAPTER VII.

'LIFE OF GOD IN THE SOUL OF MAN,' AND SERMONS.

It is interesting to compare the position Scougal had attained at eighteen years of age with the one Dr Chalmers had reached at the same age when he was a student at St Andrews University. The latter, engrossed in scientific studies, while disclaiming Mirabaud's view of this world as "an eternal universe of mere matter and motion," states his religious belief in no doubtful terms. Looking back at this period of his life twenty-four years afterwards, he writes, February 26, 1821: "Oh that He possessed me with a sense of His holiness and His love, as He at one time possessed me with a sense of His greatness and His power. I remember, when a student of

divinity, and long ere I could relish evangelical sentiment, I spent nearly a twelvemonth in a sort of mental elysium, and the one idea which ministered to my soul all its rapture was the magnificence of the Godhead, and the universal subordination of all things to the one great purpose for which He evolved and was supporting creation. I should like to be so inspired over again, but with such a view of the Deity as coalesced and was in harmony with the doctrine of the New Testament." [1] Dr Chalmers was so "inspired over again," and the penetration of his earlier view by a later faith was the means of the world receiving a classic in pulpit oratory —the 'Astronomical Discourses.' Chalmers's view of God at eighteen years of age was that of Infinite Greatness and Power; Scougal's was that of God as an Indwelling Presence, whose life was manifested in the believer, and revealed itself through him as the inward love of God, as love going out in service to man, as inward purity and humility of character. Afterwards both agreed more than they differed, but the comparison is not without interest, and unfolds the richness and variety of the religious life in different minds.

[1] Dr Hanna's Memoirs, vol. i. p. 13.

Like the late Mr R. H. Hutton, Scougal may be said from his very earliest years to have been possessed by "the yearning for a wide, ever-widening horizon"—to have been near and pursued "the ever-retreating horizon of eternal life." The quest made him what he was. The nearest parallel to Scougal's 'Life of God in the Soul of Man' is the 'Theologia Germanica': there is the same mysticism in both books—the same desire for absorption in God, without the surrender of the activity necessary for the service of daily life—the same self-renunciation—the same giving up of the human will to the will of God—the same belief in the continuous and direct activity of the Holy Spirit on the soul, and in a possible union between the soul and God—the same disclaiming of a religion based on fear or a hope of reward—the same belief in the universality of the Christian priesthood, and in the necessity of the Church for the quickening of the spiritual life. Scougal, the Aberdeen professor, and Tauler, the Dominican monk of Strasburg, with Eckhart, his teacher, were brothers in spirit, and what the 'Theologia Germanica' was to Luther, the 'Life of God in the Soul of Man' was to John Wesley and Whitefield. The fact of the matter is, both Leighton and

his pupil Scougal find their true historical parallels in Eckhart and his pupil Tauler; they were seventeenth-century "friends of God," and as worthy of the name as their beautiful predecessors in the fourteenth century.

Leighton and Scougal transcended their period, and recoiled from the controversies that characterised it; they were "the friends of God" in a Scottish garb, and the best, perhaps the truest, estimate of them is to be found in a parallel between them and their illustrious predecessors. The 'Theologia Germanica' was written about 1350, the 'Life of God in the Soul of Man' over three centuries later; and one may think that the similarity of religious conception between them is to be found in the fact that Scougal, as Leighton, drank from the old Continental streams of piety, and lived in the society of those to whom theology was *θεοπτία*. The 'Theologia Germanica,' in teaching that man is justified by faith and by faith alone, gave the popular intellectual element of the Reformation,[1] — its inwardness led to Luther's conviction: so likewise the 'Life of God in the Soul of Man' led Whitefield into the same faith, prepared John Wesley for it, and

[1] See Baron Bunsen's Letter, p. 60, in Kingsley's edition.

through these teachers and their associates — not least of all through Charles Wesley by his hymns — led to the Methodist and Evangelical revival of last century. Both books came from the deep spiritual life of their respective periods as protests against formalism and ceremonialism—the perpetual enemies of religion; both books affected spiritual life most profoundly, as well as far and wide, and emphasised religion, not as a creed or a ritual, but as a life in God.

Both teachers saw man in the light of his spiritual possibilities — as made for God, to enjoy communion with God, and to manifest the life of God in time. Both saw man in the light of the divine ideal. "A sculptor," said Tauler, "is reported to have exclaimed, on seeing a rude block of marble, 'What a God-like beauty thou hidest!'" So to the friends of God, to Leighton and Scougal, the roughness of the unregenerate soul is to be transfigured by the revelation and unfolding of its inner beauty. The three stages by which a man, according to Tauler, is led upwards till he attains true perfection—(*a*) purification, (*b*) enlightenment, (*c*) union — are assumed by Scougal, and pervade Leighton's conception of religion. The four principles, again, of the 'Theologia Germanica' — (*a*)

that sin is selfishness; (*b*) that true godliness is unselfishness; (*c*) that a truly godly life is the steadfast working out of inward freedom from, or freeness of, self; (*d*) that to become thus is for man to regain his true, original nature, the life of God that is buried within him, and emerge from the husk that besets it — are the accepted principles on which both Leighton and Scougal are to be understood, for they interpreted them in their religious writings. When we hear Tauler say: "He who is against God is dead before God."[1] "Disobedience is contrariety to God and nothing else."[2] "Had we no must be's nor ought to be's but such as God and the Truth show us and constrain us to, we should have less, forsooth, to order and do than now (for we make to ourselves much disquietude and difficulty which we might well be spared and raised above)."[3] "The life of Christ is the best and noblest, the worthiest or loveliest in God's sight that ever was or will be."[4] "God is goodness as good, and not this or that good."[5] "God loveth not Himself as Himself, but as Goodness."[6] "A God-like man is 'made partaker of

[1] Theologia Germanica, p. 54. [2] Ibid., p. 57.
[3] Ibid., p. 71. [4] Ibid., p. 104. [5] Ibid., p. 112.
[6] Ibid., p. 117.

the divine nature.'"[1] "The more a man followeth after his own self-will, and self-will groweth in him, the farther off is he from God, the true Good (for nothing burneth in hell but self-will). Therefore it hath been said, 'Put off thine own will and there will be no hell.'"[2] "All self-will is sin, and there is no sin but what springeth therefrom."[3] "He who is content to find all satisfaction in God, hath enough."[4] "If there were one in hell who should get quit of his self-will and call nothing his own, he would come out of hell into heaven."[5] "This world is an outer court of Eternity, and therefore it may well be called a Paradise, for it is such in truth." "In this Paradise all things are lawful, save one tree and the fruits thereof, . . . that is self-will, or to will otherwise than as the Eternal Will would have it."[6] "Man should claim nothing for his own, nor crave, will, love, or intend anything but God alone and what is like unto Him, that is to say, the One, Eternal, Perfect Goodness."[7]— When we hear Tauler utter such deep truths of the spiritual life, we are face to face, heart to

[1] Theologia Germanica, p. 117.
[2] Ibid., p. 122. [3] Ibid., p. 171. [4] Ibid., p. 184.
[5] Ibid., p. 206. [6] Ibid., p. 193. [7] Ibid., p. 220.

heart, with what both Leighton and Scougal pre-eminently recognised religion to be, and realised it as in their own spiritual life. The latter were not unlikely influenced by the former, but if this were so, it is because all alike were moving on the same line of natural direction; if their results, on the other hand, were attained, independent of each other, it arose from the fact that all had reached and drank from the same eternal stream—the inspiration of the living God within the soul.

Mysticism appears in all religions, for the reason that the spiritual life must ultimately reach a point where the seen becomes one with the unseen, where the unseen is felt to influence the seen. What cannot be clearly expressed in the language of the reason may yet be known to be real in the experience of the heart, and in religion the latter is as important, if not more important from the point of view of moral dynamic, than the former. So intimately related is God to the intellectual and spiritual nature of man, that unassisted reason, and unassisted moral life, are fictions: if theory is to be true to the facts of the case, it must admit the common fact of experience—the action of God upon the world of history through the action of God on the spiritual nature of man. But if an "unassisted reason" is an impossibility

when man is viewed in his relation to God, no less so is pure receptivity possible when the action of the divine Spirit is contemplated in its relation to the human soul. Man conditions or limits what he receives by the internal activity of his own nature, and so religion has to deal with two permanent factors in experience—the activity of God's Spirit on the human spirit, and the activity of the human spirit, even when in conscious communion with God. When it receives, the help given, the impulse imparted, come through itself; and so, while mysticism is true to an eternal element in the religious consciousness—that of communion—it becomes untrue to another when it seeks to annihilate the self in God. The self is not annihilated; it is only the lower self that is extinguished, but the higher, nobler self, with its activity, is purified, strengthened, raised into a newness of life. Tennyson was true to both sides of the religious life when he wrote for Balliol College the "human cry":—

"We feel we are nothing—for all is Thou and in Thee:
We feel *we are something—that* also has come from Thee:
We know we are nothing—but Thou wilt help us to be:
Hallowed be Thy Name—Hallelujah!"[1]

[1] Memoir, vol. i. p. 312.

He expressed the same with deep feeling to a friend: "Yes, it is true that there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the spiritual the only real and true. Depend upon it, the *Spiritual is the Real:* it belongs to one more than the hand and the foot. You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of my existence: I could believe you; but you never, never can convince me that the I is not an eternal Reality, and that the Spiritual is not the true and real part of me." [1]

Tennyson emphasises here two necessary and permanent elements in religion—the Life of God to be realised through the realisation, not the extinction, of the higher self in man. Mystical devotion, on the other hand, has sometimes dreamt of the suppression of the self in God, which is nothing less than spiritual suicide: but the aim defeats itself, for the very rapture of self-extinction which the mystic enjoys must be a conscious rapture, and in the very act of realising it, the self is called into being, which he sought to extinguish. The self is re-created—raised into a newness of life—in the

[1] Memoir, vol. i. p. 119.

very moment of his felt ecstasy; if it were not, no such experience were possible to him.

Tauler was wont to speak of the pious peasant who became his master in the spiritual life: on being asked where he had found God, he replied, "There where I left myself: and wheresoever I found myself, there I lost God." But the truth here expressed by the peasant is not the extinction of self, but the renunciation of a false self — of the self-will that is rebellion in the heart against the all-holy will of God. It is a dying which is a life; it is a loss which is a gain; it is the setting aside of the life of immediate desire and impulse, and a submission to the spiritual order of the world, which, in bringing the soul into harmony with the divine, also restores the soul into harmony with itself. Spiritual renunciation is a deliverance from a false life, and translation into a life which voluntarily knows no thought apart from God, entertains no wish apart from the will of God, and which, in merging itself in God, has thereby realised a higher form of being. For the life of God, consciously or unconsciously appropriated, manifests itself in a new activity, not apart from but within the individual soul; it

means the imparting of new spiritual insight, the quickening of latent powers, the realisation of possibilities unfelt before, the attainment of true being. Such was the life of piety which the "friends of God" aimed at, and the attainment of which by the best of them merits for them the appropriate epithet given them by a philosopher[1]—"beautiful souls": such a life, too, is the eternal ideal of religion, and the realisation of it by disciples would transform the world into the City of God.

We are here at the problem which Scougal set before himself, and it is not without interest to observe that he who was the first to teach the Baconian philosophy in Scotland, was also with his spiritual teacher, Leighton, prominent in translating its underlying fact into religion. In other words, he brought religion away from fruitless speculations and reasonings upon imaginary or impossible suppositions to man's own heart; from opinions and controversies to the two eternal certitudes on which it rests, God and the soul; from secondary questions,—and centred it on a Divine Person. Religion was to him a life of activity in God, free from a false asceticism on the one hand

[1] Hegel.

and from a false emotionalism on the other. Its certitude lay in a fact of experience, and it was the disciple's strength to be able to say, "I know"; it was a refuge from theories about God to a life of consciously felt peace and repose in God; its ideal was not only "as ever in my great Taskmaster's eye," but heart to heart, soul to soul, with Him, who is the Father of spirits, and who loves all men with an everlasting love, outliving even their sins. In the life of Thomas Aquinas, we read that one day Christ is said to have appeared to him, and asked him what reward he craved for all his learned writings. "Nothing but Thyself, O Lord" (Non nisi Te, O Domine), was the good man's reply. Such, too, was Scougal's great quest; and although speech at its best on such a subject must be "as broken light upon the depth of the unspoken,"[1] his book shows that his was a nature with true experience of the deep things of God, and spoke from what it knew. Besides a fine mysticism, there is also in 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man' and the Sermons a philosophical insight, a logical sequence of thought, an orderly arrangement, that make it attractive, and render it an instructive unfolding of the inner facts of the

[1] George Eliot.

spiritual life. As his ripe message is necessary for the thesis of this book, we now sketch the sequence of its thought.

Scougal begins by correcting mistakes about religion. Religion does not consist in orthodox opinions, nor does it belong solely to the understanding, otherwise its disciples would become divided into sects. Religion does not relate solely to the outward man, nor consist in a constant course of external duties and model of performances. Religion does not refer solely to the affections, nor lie in rapturous hearts and ecstatic devotion; nor can it be associated with wickedness and vice in any form. True religion is a union of the soul with God, a real participation of the divine nature, the very image of God drawn upon the soul; or, in the Apostle's phrase, it is Christ formed within us. "Briefly, I know not how the nature of religion can be more fully expressed than by calling it a divine life. And under these terms I shall discourse of it — showing first how it is called *a life*, and then how it is termed *divine*." [1]

It is called *a life* from its permanency and stability: it has not fits and starts; it may suffer

[1] The Life of God in the Soul of Man, p. 3.

sad decays, yet it is never quite extinguished. It is so named because it is an inward, free, and self-moving principle: the love of God within arises not in virtue of a command, but as a new nature, instructing and prompting the soul to love God. Devotion is the emanation of this life, the natural employment of the new-born soul. Religion is characterised by reasonableness, purity, goodness. Religion again, while it is a *life*, is also a *divine life*, because God is its real source, and because it resembles God in its nature. It is (*a*) the resemblance of the divine perfection; (*b*) the image of the Almighty shining in the soul of man; (*c*) a real participation of His nature; (*d*) a beam of the eternal light; (*e*) a drop of the infinite ocean of goodness; (*f*) those who are imbued with it may be said to have God dwelling in their souls, and to have Christ formed within them.[1] The natural life prevails in those who are strangers to this life, and have inclinations to those things that are pleasing and acceptable to nature. It is a self-love issuing forth in as many forms as men have appetites and inclinations. Its root is *sense*, just as the root of the divine life is *faith*. "In a word, the difference betwixt a religious and wicked man

[1] Ibid., p. 7.

is, that in the one the divine life bears sway, in the other the animal life doth prevail."[1] "Intemperance and lust, injustice and oppression, and all those other impieties which abound in the world, and render it so miserable, are the issues of self-love, the effect of the animal life, when it is neither overpowered by religion nor governed by natural reason."[2] The divine life in the soul is a universal and unbounded affection, and is the mastery over natural inclinations, so that we are never betrayed to those things which are blamable. Faith is the root of this life; its chief branches are love to God, charity to men, purity and humility; it is a kind of sense or feeling persuasion of spiritual things. It extends itself unto all divine truths; in our lapsed estate, hath a peculiar relation to the declaration of God's mercy and reconcilableness to sinners through a Mediator, and, in receiving its characteristics from its principal object, is termed faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ is the very foundation of heaven laid here and now in the soul, and carries with it the assurance of God's favour; and he who has it says with Leighton, "I had rather see the real impressions of a God-like nature upon my soul than have

[1] The Life of God in the Soul of Man, p. 8. [2] Ibid., p. 10.

a vision from heaven, or an angel sent to tell me that my name were enrolled in the book of life." [1]

God, again, who reveals this life, through faith in the disciples as an appropriating or assimilative power, has exemplified it in the life of our blessed Saviour, who taught by practice what He required of others—who made His own life and conversation an exact resemblance of those laws which He prescribed; and if ever true goodness was visible to mortal eyes, it was when His presence beautified and illuminated this lower world. Christ manifested in His life (1) the love of God as a sincere and devout affection (*a*) by His diligence in doing God's will throughout it: the delight of His childhood was the constant employment of His riper years; (*b*) by His no less patient submission, without a repining thought or discontented word, to the will of God; (*c*) by making His whole life a prayer —a constant communion with God — praying, although He had no sins to confess, nor any secular interests to care for.

(2) Christ's life manifested perfect love to man as well as perfect charity towards man.

(3) Christ's life manifested sinless purity in

[1] Ibid., p. 14.

thought, word, and deed: He trampled upon all time's ambitions, and revealed a neglect of all worldly enjoyments. The world's sorrow and sin was His cross, and "we many times hear of our Saviour's sighs and groans and tears; but never that He laughed, and but once that He rejoiced in spirit: so that through His whole life He did exactly answer that character given of Him by the prophet of old, that He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." [1]

(4) Christ's life manifested His humility — of Himself He was able to do nothing: He was so impressed with a deep sense of the Infinite perfections of God that He appeared as nothing in His own eyes, so far as He was a creature.

Such is the foundation of Henry Scougal's religious teaching, and in the heart of his book there is to be found the following prayer for "one who had formerly entertained some false notions of religion, and begins to discover what it is." It is most likely that the "one" was himself, and the prayer is beautiful in itself, but not less so as exhibiting that humility of character in himself which he found perfectly embodied in his Lord and Master.

[1] The Life of God in the Soul of Man, p. 19.

"Infinite and Eternal Majesty, author and fountain of being and blessedness, how little do we poor sinful creatures know of Thee or of the way to please Thee! We talk of religion, and pretend unto it; but, alas! how few are there that know and consider what it means! How easily do we mistake the affections of our nature, and issues of self-love, for those divine graces which can alone render us acceptable in Thy sight! It may justly grieve me to consider that I should have wandered so long and contented myself so often with vain shadows and false images of piety and religion; yet I cannot but acknowledge and adore Thy goodness, who hast been pleased in some measure to open mine eyes and let me see what it is at which I ought to aim. I rejoice to consider what mighty improvements my nature is capable of, and what a divine temper of spirit doth shine in those whom Thou art pleased to choose and cause to approach unto Thee. Blessed be Thine infinite mercy, who sentest Thine own Son to dwell among men, and instruct them by His example, as well as by His laws, giving them a perfect pattern of what they ought to be. Oh that the holy life of the blessed Jesus may be always in my thoughts and before mine eyes, till I receive a deep sense

and impression of those excellent graces that shined so eminently in Him; and let me never cease my endeavours till that new and divine nature prevail in my soul, and Christ be formed within me." [1]

Scougal, having laid the foundation of his religious teaching, and having viewed the origin of it as coming from God, proceeds now to deal with it as manifested in the disciple.

Holiness is the right temper, the vigorous and healthful constitution, of the soul; it is stirred by divine impressions, and moulded by a sense of invisible things. (1) Holiness is the *love of God* in the soul of man. The worth and excellency of a soul being measured by the object of its love, it follows that that must be the highest soul-life which is rooted and centred in God, for although imperfections also glide into it, it grows through that affection unto a conformity with that perfection which it loves. Divine love in the soul doth advance and elevate it, and can alone make it happy. It is stimulated by the love of its object, by the certainty of being beloved again, for the happiness of love depends on the return it meets with: it is quickened by the presence of the beloved object, and the divine love makes

[1] The Life of God in the Soul of Man, pp. 21, 22.

it partake of an infinite happiness. To love God is to find a sweetness in every dispensation of life, and all the duties of religion pleasant.

(2) Another aspect of the divine life in man is a universal charity and love. Holiness is next *a love of man.* As charity flows from a noble and excellent temper, it is accompanied with the greatest satisfaction and pleasure. It is the life of heaven on earth. "Certainly, next to the love and enjoyment of God, that ardent charity and affection wherewith blessed souls do embrace each other is justly to be reckoned as the greatest felicity of those regions above; and did it universally prevail in the world, it would anticipate that blessedness, and make us taste of the joys of heaven upon earth." [1]

(3) The next manifestation of the divine life is *purity.* This is accompanied with lasting pleasure, for that which is sensual defiles and so disturbs the soul. Purity is a contempt of sensual pleasure, and a resolve to overcome the trouble and pain we meet with in the discharge of duty. It is also a delivery from that base drudgery whereby a man becomes the slave of his lusts—it is a victory over them. Never can that person be capable of anything

[1] Ibid., p. 33.

noble who is sunk in the gross pleasures of sense or bewitched with the airy gratification of fancy. To be religious is to be possessed with a more sublime and divine temper: knowing that man was made for higher things than sensual pleasure, the religious soul scorns to step aside one foot out of the way of holiness.

(4) The fourth manifestation of holiness, or the divine life within the soul, is *humility*. This grace is also accompanied with happiness and tranquillity, and "must not that humility be a noble and excellent endowment, when the very shadows of it are accounted so necessary a part of good breeding"? "The humble person hath the advantage, when he is despised, that none can think more meanly of him than he doth of himself, and therefore he is not troubled at the matter, but can easily bear those reproaches which wound the other to the soul."[1]

For the disciple to realise these manifestations fully, it is necessary to struggle against despondent thoughts by observing the unreasonableness of them; by feeling the help of the intercessions of the Church, and realising that the saints on earth and the angels in heaven are engaged on the side of the better

[1] P. 36.

part; by doing all he can and depending on the divine assistance; by trusting in the leading of Divine Providence, different in every life, for God hath several ways of dealing with the souls of men, and it is sufficient if the work be accomplished, whatever the methods may have been in breaking up the ground.

Besides these general directions, Scougal proceeds to give special ones, that are helpful in the evolution of the spiritual life. It is necessary (*a*) to avoid and abandon all vicious and sinful practices; (*b*) to shun all manner of sin; (*c*) to know what things are sinful; (*d*) to resist the temptations to sin by considering the evil they will draw on us; (*e*) to keep a constant watch over ourselves; (*f*) to examine often our actions; (*g*) to restrain ourselves in many things lawful; (*h*) to put ourselves out of love with the world; (*i*) to do those outward actions that are commanded; (*j*) to form internal acts of devotion and charity.

To intensify *the Love of God*, we must seek living thoughts about God—thoughts that warm and inspire; we must avoid "spiritless and paralytic thoughts," which are incapable of moving the will or of directing the hand. To beget such thoughts, we must consider the excellency

of the divine nature, and meditate upon God's goodness and love, especially in the gift of His Son. "I remember," he says on this last point, "one of the poets hath an ingenious fancy to express the passion wherewith he found himself overcome, after a long resistance: that the god of love had shot all his golden arrows at him, but could never pierce his heart, until at length he put himself into the bow and darted himself straight into his breast. Methinks this doth some way adumbrate God's method of dealing with men."[1]

To beget *charity*, we must remember that all men are nearly related to God,—that they carry His image upon them. To beget *purity*, we should consider the dignity of our nature, and meditate on the joys of heaven—those pleasures that endure for evermore. To beget *humility*, we should consider our own failures, as it is well observed by a pious writer, "The deepest and most pure humility doth not so much arise from the consideration of our own faults, as from a calm and quiet contemplation of the divine purity and goodness. Our spots never appear so clearly as when we place them before this infinite light;

[1] Pp. 42-56.

and we never seem less in our own eyes than when we look down upon ourselves from on high."[1]

Prayer is another instrument of religion, and whether uttered with the voice or conceived by the heart without an utterance in word, or as a meditation leading to God in sighs and groans, purifies the soul and disposes it unto a holy and religious temper. Religion is to be advanced by the same means with which it began, and the use of the holy sacrament is peculiarly appointed to nourish and increase the spiritual life, *when once it is begotten in the soul.* He thus views the sacrament, not as the originator but as a help in sustaining the divine life in the soul.

Such is a short statement of the message expressed by Scougal in his remarkable book, which is now much forgotten, but deserves to be better remembered. It contains throughout the marks of a deeply learned and accomplished mind; its piety is as conspicuous as its learning; its ethical temper as striking as its chastened and sober mysticism; and within it there breathes the spirit of one who lived very much above the world, in the atmosphere of God. As has been already indicated, it is

[1] Pp. 66-71.

the product of the period when Scougal was minister of Auchterless; and belonging to the same period there are nine published sermons which bear the same message, although in a less systematised form, and which must be taken into account in an estimate of his teaching. Like Leighton's, they contain frequent references to classical literature, as well as to the patristic and pious literature that has come from the heart of the Church in all ages. Piety and scholarship are in them wedded together. To take short examples: thus in his sermon on the Nativity (Sermon vi.) he speaks of joy and cheerfulness as "being so far inconsistent with religion, when rightly ordered, that we find them many times allowed and recommended in Scripture. . . . That you may not think this a liberty proper only for the former dispensation, but that Christians are obliged to greater severity, the apostle doth no less than three times give this admonition to the Philippians, 'Rejoice in the Lord: rejoice always in the Lord: yea, I say, rejoice.'" In relation to this perhaps it was, that the old hermit Palladius, having five hundred scholars, used never to dismiss them without this admonition, "My friends, be cheerful: forget not, I beseech you, to be cheerful." This was the constant lecture he repeated, as often as St John was wont to do these words, 'My

little children, love one another."[1] He was thus not without beholding the graciousness, the winsomeness, the geniality of religion, while emphasising it as a controlling life within the soul, and as a binding law for the conscience.

Again, in his sermon on "The indispensable duty of loving our enemies," he says, "All anger is not vicious. We may be angry and not sin. This passion, as all others implanted in us by God, is innocent when kept within its due bounds. It has its proper office in the mind as the spleen in the body, but its excess and distemper swell into a disease. To make it allowable, it must not exceed the value of the cause, nor the proportion of the circumstances. It must be governed by discretion, and kept within the bounds of reason, that it break not forth into indecent expressions, or violent and blamable actions. And further, it must not be too permanent and lasting,—we must not let the sun set upon our anger. Plutarch tells us that the Pythagoreans were careful to observe the very letter of this precept; for if anger had boiled up to the height of an injury or reproach, before sunset they would salute each other and renew their friendship. They were ashamed that the same

[1] P. 179.

anger which had disturbed the counsels of the day should also trouble the quiet and repose of the night, lest, mingling with their rest and dreams, it should become prevalent and habitual in them. And, sure, we owe an infinitely greater deference to the precepts of our blessed Saviour and His holy apostles than they did to their Master's reasonings and advices. And though we should not take this precept in its strictest and literal signification, yet this we must know, that the same passion and resentment which was innocent and rational in its first rise, may become vicious and criminal by its continuance. Anger may kindle in the breast of a wise man, but 'rests only in the bosom of a fool.'"[1]

Again, (3) "We can never take better measures of a man's spirit than from the things he delighteth in, and sets his heart upon: 'qualis amor, talis animus' (as is the love, so is the mind)."[2] (4) Chrysostom was one of his favourite teachers. In his sermon on the ministerial function he quotes from his work ('De Sacerdote') regarding the administration of the Sacrament—"though," he adds, "some of his expressions, being figurative and hyperbolical, have been abused by the Romish

[1] Pp. 48, 49. [2] P. 9.

party: 'When thou dost behold the Lord of Glory offered up, and the priest performing the sacrifice, and the people round about dyed, as it were, and made red with that precious blood—where, I pray thee, dost thou conceive thyself to be? Dost thou think thou art on earth, and conversing among mortal creatures; or art thou not rather on a sudden transported into heaven? Dost thou not lose all thoughts of the body and material things, and with a pure mind and naked soul behold the things that are done in those regions above? And when the minister has invoked the divine Spirit, . . . tell me in what order of things are we to place him! what uprightness and purity is required of him! what hands should they be that administer those things! what lips that utter and pronounce those words! for at that time the holy angels stand by the priest; the place is full of blessed spirits who desire to look into those things; and all the orders of the heavenly host do shout and raise their voices together, as we may easily believe, if we consider the work that is then in hand.'"[1]

So to similar purpose we find him quoting Augustine and Gregory of Nazianzen. Herbert was his

[1] Pp. 264, 265.

favourite poet, and he quotes Leighton thus: "It was an excellent saying of an eminent and holy person yet alive in our Church, that he would rather be instrumental in persuading one man to be serious in religion than the whole nation to be Conformists."[1] With regard to ordination, he said with George Herbert: "I am so proud of His service, that I will always observe and obey, and do His will, and always call Him Jesus my Master. I will always contemn my birth and any title or dignity that can be conferred upon me, when I shall compare them with the title of being a priest, and serving at the altar of Jesus my Master." He would not study the gentleman so much as to forget that primarily he was the clergyman, and his high ideal of his office is well declared in his sermon before the Synod of Aberdeen: "The great business of our calling is to advance the divine life in the world; to make religion sway and prevail; to frame and mould the souls of men into a conformity to God, and superinduce the beautiful lineaments of His blessed image upon them; to enlighten their understandings and inform their judgments, rectify their wills and order their passions, and sanctify all

[1] P. 298.

their affections. The world lieth in sin, and it is our work to awaken men out of that deadly sleep, to rescue them out of that dismal condition. We are the instruments of God for effectuating these great designs; and, though we be not accountable for the success, when we have done what lieth in our power, yet nothing below this should be our aim; and we should never cease our endeavours until that gracious change be wrought in every person committed to our charge."[1] The study of liturgies was evidently a favourite one of Scougal's, and in his sermon (No. vii.) on the Passion, he says: "Thus we have given you some rude, imperfect hints of His great and unspeakable sufferings. But, oh! how little of them do we understand to very good purpose! It was *for this reason* the ancient fathers of the Greek Church in their liturgy, after they have recounted all the particular pains as they are set down in His Passion, and by all and every one of them called for mercy, do after all shut up with this supplication: '*By thine unknown sorrows and sufferings, felt by Thee, but not distinctly known by us, have mercy upon us and save us.*'"[2]

There are other elements in his teaching, important as reflecting Scougal's mind on other aspects

[1] Pp. 272, 273. [2] Pp. 230, 231.

of religion, that must be stated, for they had no little influence over the Wesleys and their associates.

As to humility, he states: "The most deep and pure humility doth not so much arise from the consideration of our faults and defects (though that also may have its own place) as from a calm contemplation of the divine perfection. By reflecting on ourselves, we may discover something of our own sinfulness and misery, and thereby be filled with a kind of boisterous and turbulent grief and indignation; but by fixing our eyes on the infinite greatness and holiness of God, we are most fully convinced of our own meanness. This will sink us to the very bottom of our beings, and make us appear as nothing in our own sight, when beheld from so great a height. And this is really the greatest elevation of the soul, and there is nothing in the world so noble and excellent as the sublimity of humble minds." [1]

Scougal disliked controversy in religion as much as Wesley, and, like Leighton, his thoughts were so centred on the important matters of religion as to place in a secondary position all those of lesser importance. "Ordinarily the animosities are greatest where the differences are least; and one

[1] Pp. 28, 29.

party of a Reformed Church shall be more incensed against another than either against the superstition and tyranny of Rome, or the carnality of the Mahometan faith." [1] In another passage he pleads for a sense of the eternal world, as that which will solemnise and raise the mind above secondary matters: "The frequent and serious thoughts of death would conduce much to allay our hatred, and dispose us to meekness and charity. Naturalists tell us that when swarms of bees fight in the air, they are dispersed by throwing dust among them. Did we in our thoughts often reflect upon that dust whereunto we must all shortly return, we should more easily lay down our quarrels and animosities. While we contend about small things, little do we consider that death is coming on apace, and will swallow up the victor and the vanquished—him that is in the right, and him that is in the wrong. Look back upon the private contentions or public commotions which infested the world a hundred years ago. Where are they who managed them? They are all gone down into the dark and silent grave. Death hath decided their controversies, and within a few days it will do so with ours, and send us all to plead our

[1] P. 42.

cause before our great Judge; and it will go ill with us if we appear there in malice. Therefore why should our hatred be long since our life is so short? One would think we should find better employment for the short time we have to spend here." [1]

It is important to consider his views *on the Sacrament.*

1. It is a memorial service—a representation. "The representation of Christ's death in the sacrament is so ordered, that it might both help the soul and leave it something to do in forming its own apprehensions and resentment. In it we see so much as to awaken our souls, but not so much as to keep them awake without themselves. The outward object serves to excite our faith, but then leaves it to its proper exercise and employment." [2]

2. The terms "body" and "blood" are to be understood in a spiritual sense. "This sacrament doth not only represent a wonder that is already past, but exhibits one anew. The bread and wine that we receive are not bare and empty signs to put us in mind of the death and sufferings of Christ. Our Saviour calls them His *body* and *blood.* And such, without question, they are to all spiritual

[1] Pp. 76, 77. [2] Pp. 248, 249.

purposes and advantages. We are not obliged to believe that, after consecration, the bread and wine do vanish and the body and blood of Christ succeed in their room; our sense and reason do assure us of the contrary; the Scripture doth nowhere affirm it, nor did ever the ancient Church believe it; nor is it possible to conceive the use or benefit of this strange and unintelligible change. 'It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing;' these words of our Saviour *are spirit and life*, are to be understood in a vital and spiritual sense. But though these elements be not changed in their nature and substance, yet they undergo a mighty change as to their *efficacy and use;* and that food which could before but yield a little refreshment to the body is now become a means to nourish and strengthen the soul, an instrument to convey unto us all those blessings that the body and blood of our Saviour can afford us." [1]

3. "In this sacrament Christ doth convey Himself unto the souls of men, and taketh stronger possession of them. As after the sop Satan entered into Judas, so with these holy elements Christ entereth into the hearts of His people, becomes the food and nourishment of their souls; He

[1] Pp. 249, 250.

diffuseth Himself through all their faculties, and animates them with His life and Spirit, that they may have no will or affections of their own, no desires or inclinations different from His, but that every pulse may answer the motions of His heart, and all their powers be actuated and enlivened by His Spirit,—in a word, that it may not be any more they, but Christ that liveth in them. Thus we are fed and nourished by the body and blood of Christ, while the power of the Godhead doth diffuse its virtue and operation into the human nature, to the enlivening the hearts of those who do rightly receive these sacramental pledges." [1]

The sacrament is thus to him a means of quickening faith in the living Christ, and in bringing faith spiritually heart to heart with Him who is the life of the soul, making it a means of strengthening the divine life in the soul. Scougal was free from superstitious views regarding the sacrament, and looked at it through the light with which Tennyson regarded it:—

> "It is but a Communion, not a Mass:
> No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast." [2]

In the celebration of the sacrament, he would with Dr Lindsay Alexander have emphasised the last

[1] Pp. 251, 252. [2] Life, vol. ii. p. 412.

three words—"Ye do show the Lord's death *till He come*"—an emphasis which impressed his hearers and made them feel that he was afresh thinking of and rejoicing in their full meaning. When told of this impression, Dr Alexander listened with evident pleasure and said, "It interests me to hear that, for I have always felt that in these words is the very essence of the service. The Church is not only called to remembrance but to anticipation."[1]

With regard to the question, "Does Christianity depend upon the Church as a visible body, or does the Church depend upon Christianity?" as far as one can understand Scougal's mind, one seems right in asserting that he believed the Church to depend upon Christianity; that it is more of a witness than a source; that we belong to the Church because we belong to Christ, not to Christ because we belong to the Church. As far as his views on Church government can be understood, he would probably have said with Bishop Ewing, that if Episcopacy were necessary for the well-being of the Church, it is not necessary for its being;[2] that if it be suitable for its *bene esse*, it is not indispensable for its *esse*—that the best

[1] W. L. Alexander, D.D., LL.D., His Life and Work, p. 266.

[2] Memoir of the Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, p. 557.

is that which unites Presbytery and Episcopacy in an efficient whole. It is true to say that Scougal's mind was like Leighton's, so impressed and ruled by the verities of the Christian faith that all other questions relating to matters of secondary importance were matters to be interpreted by efficiency, charity, and good feeling. The sole reality in religion to him was Christ in the soul and the soul in Christ. Strong in this, he was powerful to give strength.

CHAPTER VIII.

INFLUENCE OVER THE OXFORD METHODISTS AND THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

"He begins who animates."

In the previous chapters a somewhat minute examination has been given of Scougal's life, work, and teaching: in this one it will be our endeavour to investigate their far-reaching influence, so far as that can now be done. Spiritual influence may be conscious and unconscious: as to the first, in Scougal's case, we have direct testimony; and as to the second, we have the internal evidence of letters, which shows that both the conception and style of Scougal's books influenced the Oxford Methodists far more than they were conscious of; yet this, no less than the first, points to the spiritual potency of his ideal of religion. There were reformers before the Refor-

mation—such as the poor men of Lyons and the like, who, although they brought about no immediate deliverance, yet were the forerunners of Luther and the Reformers, and without whose early efforts even the gigantic revolution wrought by the latter might not have been so effective. Now it seems true to say, after an examination of the evidence, that Scougal had no little power in shaping the religious ideal of that remarkable group at Oxford known as the Oxford Methodists, who afterwards wielded, both directly and indirectly, a far-reaching influence, both without and within the Church of England. It seems true to say that the early origin of the movement is to be found in Scougal and in the religious life as depicted by him. Both the teaching and example of this young Scottish saint and teacher stamped themselves upon this band of young workers at Oxford. All Scougal's works, as we have sketched them, were before them: not least of all Dr Gairden's Sermon, which deals so well and so sympathetically with his personality.

The 'Life of God in the Soul of Man' was first published in 1677, with an introduction by Bishop Burnet, and that edition was long known at Epworth. Mrs Wesley distinctly says so. Again, this book was patronised by the Society for Pro-

moting Christian Knowledge, and was reprinted in 1726, with the addition of the 'Nine Discourses on Important Subjects,' and the funeral sermon by Dr Gairden.[1] About the same period was published his 'Private Reflections and Occasional Maxims,' and these volumes were all known to the Oxford Methodists.

It was Charles Wesley who was the real founder of the little society at Oxford known as the Holy Club, during the time that John Wesley was assisting his father at Epworth. When John Wesley returned to Oxford, he was soon at the head of the society, but Charles Wesley was the founder of it. He had become impressed with the sense of vital religion, and had resolved to devote himself to a religious life. He formed and gathered around himself a small company of like-minded students, for intellectual and spiritual improvement. On week-days they read the classics, but chiefly the Greek Testament; on Sundays, Divinity, and were regular in their attendance on Holy Communion.[2]

When Whitefield joined the society in 1732, there were or had been connected with it William

[1] Chalmers's General Biographical Dict., vol. xxvii. p. 288.

[2] The society was thus both academic and religious, like Scougal's (see p. 13).

Morgan, Clayton of Brasenose, Ingham of Queen's, Gambold of Christchurch, Hervey and Wesley of Lincoln, Broughton of Exeter, Kinchin of Corpus Christi, Hutchins, Whitelamb, and Westley Hall at Lincoln. These were earnest students, resolved on the better part; and when Whitefield joined the club, he came as a perplexed truth-seeker. Now the book that Charles Wesley gave him in this condition was Scougal's 'Life of God in the Soul of Man.' It was thus well known to Charles Wesley, and he considered it as adapted to the spiritual condition of his friend: it was known, we may infer, to all the other members, and the following is George Whitefield's own testimony to its influence over him, and the change it produced within him. Referring to an interview with Charles Wesley, Whitefield writes thus:—

"I thankfully embraced the opportunity (and, blessed be God! it was one of the most profitable visits I ever made in my life). My soul at that time was athirst for some spiritual friends to lift up my hands when they hung down, and to strengthen my feeble knees. He soon discovered it, and, like a wise winner of souls, made all his discourses tend that way. And when he had put into my hand Professor Frank's treatise against

the 'Fear of Man' and a book entitled 'The Country Parson's Advice to his Parishioners,' the last of which was wonderfully blessed to my soul, I took my leave.

"In a short time he let me have another book entitled 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man' (and, though I had fasted, watched, and prayed, and received the sacrament so long, yet I never knew what true religion was till God sent me *that excellent treatise* by the hands of my never-to-be-forgotten friend).

"At my first reading it I wondered what the author meant by saying 'that some falsely placed religion in going to church, doing hurt to no one, being constant in the duties of the closet, and now and then reaching out their hands to give alms to their poor neighbours.' 'Alas!' thought I, 'if this be not religion, what is?' God soon showed me; for in reading a few lines further, that 'true religion was a union of the soul with God, and Christ formed within us,' a ray of divine light was instantaneously darted in upon my soul, and from that moment, but not till then, did I know that I must be a new creature. . . . From time to time Mr Wesley permitted me to come unto him, and instructed me as I was able to

bear it. By degrees he introduced me to the rest of his Christian brethren (the Methodists). They built me up daily in the knowledge and fear of God, and taught me to endure hardness like a good soldier of Jesus Christ." [1]

Again he says at a later period of his life (1769): "I must bear testimony to my old friend, Mr Charles Wesley. He put a book into my hands called 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man,' whereby God showed me that I must be born again or be damned. I know the place: it may perhaps be superstitious, but whenever I go to Oxford I cannot help running to the spot where Jesus Christ first revealed Himself to me, and gave me the new birth. I learned that a man may go to church, say his prayers, receive the sacrament, and yet not be a Christian. How did my heart rise and shudder like a poor man that is afraid to look into his ledger lest he should find himself a bankrupt. 'Shall I burn this book? shall I throw it down? or shall I search it?' I did search it; and, holding the book in my hand, thus addressed the God of heaven and earth: 'Lord, if I am not a Christian, for Jesus Christ's sake show me what Christianity

[1] Tyerman's Life vol. i. p. 17.

is, that I may not be damned at last.' I read a little further, and discovered that they who know anything of religion know it is a vital union with the Son of God—Christ formed in the heart. O what a ray of divine life did then break in upon my soul! I fell a-writing to all my brethren and to my sisters. I talked to the students as they came into my room. I laid aside all trifling conversation. I put all trifling books away, and was determined to study to be a saint, and then to be a scholar. From that moment God has been carrying on His blessed work in my soul. I am now fifty-five years of age, and shall leave you in a few days; but I tell you, my brethren, I am more and more convinced that this is the truth of God, and that without it you can never be saved by Jesus Christ."[1]

Such is Whitefield's clear and decided testimony to the impression Scougal made on him, and he does not hesitate to aver that he was the influence that led to his spiritual awakening and conversion. And thus a quiet Scottish teacher, who died at the early age of twenty-eight, was the means of shaping the thought and ideal of the greatest pulpit orator of

[1] Eighteen Sermons preached by Rev. George Whitefield, revised by Dr Gifford, p. 359.

last century, who riveted thousands by his message, who began the Evangelical revival, originated itinerancy, restored field-preaching, was welcomed in England, Ireland, America, and became a strong spiritual force in the Church of Scotland, and, in the dead days of Moderatism, did so much in Scotland to commend the Evangelical party to the Church and awaken the country. Dr Gillies of Glasgow, a Scottish minister who wrote his biography, thus refers to him: "One thing remains to be mentioned of an infinitely higher order—namely, the power of God which so remarkably accompanied his labours. It is here that Mr Whitefield is most to be envied. When we consider the multitudes that were brought under lasting religious impressions, and the multitudes that were wrought upon *in the same manner by the ministry of others, excited by his example*, we are led into the same sentiment with Mr Wesley in his funeral sermon, "What an honour hath it pleased God to put upon His faithful servant."[1]

Such is the testimony of an eye-witness and friend, who was in the heart of the movement, and knew about what he wrote. Whitefield's fourteen visits to Scotland had a far-reaching result in awakening the Church of Scotland. He was heartily invited

[1] Whitefield and Wesley in Scotland, p. 60.

into its pulpits, and his work left its mark on the religious temper of the period. He knew no sectarian distinctions, and his preaching was throughout in its message an interpretation of Scougal's teaching, with additions. So deeply did it penetrate him, that he is not only possessed of Scougal's ideas, but even unconsciously produces his words—a true and lasting testimony to the influence of the man over him. Scougal was not his only teacher—there were others too; but if ever the message of a religious book became living within a religious teacher, it was surely here. To take but one example, which reproduces both the idea and language of 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man'—we have in "The Almost Christian," the following: "One reason why so many are only almost Christians is, because they set out with false notions of religion. Though they live in a Christian country, they know not what Christianity is: *some place religion in being of this or that communion; more in morality; most in a round of duties; and few, very few, acknowledge it to be, what it really is, a thorough inward change of nature, a divine life, a participation of Jesus Christ, a union of the soul with God.* Hence it happens that so many, even of the most knowing professors, when you converse with them concerning the

essence, the life, the soul of religion, I mean our new birth in Jesus Christ, confess themselves quite ignorant of the matter, and cry out with Nicodemus, How can this thing be?"[1] "Heavenly-mindedness is the very life of a Christian. It is all in all."[2]

"Oh for a plerophory of faith! to be filled with the Holy Ghost! This is the grand point. All our lukewarmness, all our timidity, all our backwardness to do good, to spend and be spent for God, — all is owing to our want of more of that faith which is the inward, heartfelt, self-evident demonstration of things not seen."[3]

Leighton used to say that if he were to choose a place to die in, it should be an inn. In such a place he thought a Christian believer might properly finish his pilgrimage; the whole world being to him but a large and noisy inn, and he a wayfarer, tarrying in it as short a time as possible, and then hasting away to his Father's house. Besides, he considered it undesirable to be surrounded by weeping friends and officious domestics, whose attentions might distract the mind, when it ought to be wholly centred upon

[1] Tyerman's Life of Whitefield, vol. i. p. 96.
[2] Ibid., p. 515. [3] Ibid., vol. ii. p. 507.

God — no such distraction being likely to result from the unconcerned ministry of strangers. This singular wish was gratified, for Leighton died in the Bell Inn, Warwick Lane.[1] Scougal has the same thought in one of his sermons. Speaking against sadness and dejection of spirits, he says: "Why should not religious people who have the friendship of God, and so many divine blessings in present possession, and the certain expectation of more and greater, cherish a perpetual joy, and ever be of good comfort? What should afflict them, or cast them down? Is it worldly crosses or fears?—they have not their portions in things of this world; they are strangers and pilgrims on earth, and cannot *in reason be much solicitous about their accommodation in an inn, which they are so shortly to leave.*"[2] The same idea filled Whitefield's mind: he called himself a Gospel-rover,[3] yet was as happy as a man could be outside of heaven[4] — so catholic as to love the image of his Master, wherever he saw it.[5] His one diversion on his wanderings was that of doing good:[6] his motto was, "Poor, yet making

[1] Pearson's Life of Leighton, vol. i. p. 80.

[2] Sermons, pp. 185, 186. [3] Tyerman's Life, vol. i. p. 64.

[4] Ibid., p. 87. [5] Ibid., p. 113. [6] Ibid., p. 298.

many rich;"[1] and towards the close of his life he added, "A pilgrim's life is to me the sweetest on this side eternity"[2]—"Field-preaching, field-preaching for ever."[3] He died far from his native land, at Newbury Port, New England.

As to Charles Wesley, it cannot be doubted that he must have been deeply influenced and helped by Scougal's book before he would recommend it to Whitefield.[4] He too was penetrated by the same spirit, and the inward view of religion, as a participation of the divine nature for which he pleads and of which he sings, was similar to that of the Scottish professor. Scougal's book was among the earliest influences brought to bear on Charles Wesley, both at Epworth and Oxford, and his mind was profoundly affected by it. He emphasises more than Scougal the direct, immediate action of the Holy Spirit on the soul; but the manifested life of religion as love of God, love of man, purity and humility, is grasped and expressed in his lovely hymns. Thus in "O for a heart to praise my God," we have—

"A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true, and clean,

[1] Tyerman's Life, vol. i. p. 522. [2] Ibid., vol. ii. p. 559.
[3] Ibid., p. 560. [4] See Jackson's Life, vol. i. p. 225.

Which neither death nor life can part
From Him that dwells within.

A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine,
Perfect and right and pure and good,
A copy, Lord, of Thine!

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart:
Come quickly from above;
Write Thy new name upon my heart,
Thy new, best name of love."

Again, it is in—

"O Love Divine, how sweet Thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up by Thee?
I thirst, and faint, and die to prove
The greatness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ to me.

. . . . . .

God only knows the love of God:
O that it now were shed abroad
In this poor stony heart!
For love I sigh, for love I pine:
This only portion, Lord, be mine,
Be mine this better part."

Again—

"Love Divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,

Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.

Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art :
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver :
Let us all Thy life receive ;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave."

In "Jesus, lover of my soul" we have—

"Thou of life the fountain art ;
Freely let me take of Thee :
Spring Thou up within my heart ;
Rise to all eternity."

Such is the language of spiritual genius and spiritual experience ; but does that forbid us recognising the influence of an early teacher ?

As to John Wesley, we have direct testimony. During his Christ Church days (1720-1726) we know that two favourite books were those of Thomas à Kempis and Henry Scougal. He probably used 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man' from the time that he was about eighteen years of age till he was twenty-three ; and is

not that a period open to influence that ever abides?—a time, to use Anselm's apt figure,[1] when the mind is as wax fitly tempered for the seal, receiving impressions most vividly, and retaining them most pervasively? Is not that the epoch when belief can best be moulded?

When John Wesley was considering the question of taking orders, he wrote to his mother regarding his mental difficulties, and the book she specially commended to him was 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man.'[2] Of it she says two things: (1) "an excellent good book," and (2) "an acquaintance of mine many years ago."[3] We know that he was afterwards influenced by Jeremy Taylor's 'Rules for Holy Living and Dying,' by Law's 'Christian Perfection' and 'Serious Call,' by Luther's 'Preface to the Epistle to the Romans,' by intercourse with the Moravians; but the Scottish influence from Aberdeen, through 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man,' was among the earliest, and certainly it was not the least potent. His mother's judgment of it, and her statements regarding it, lead one to believe that

[1] Dean Church's Anselm, p. 88. [2] Overton's Life, p. 14.

[3] See Dr Clarke's Wesley Family, vol. ii. p. 103; also Life of Susanna Wesley, by Eliza Clarke, p. 174.

it was valued at Epworth, and found helpful in the remarkable religious education which all the members of the Wesley family received from their saintly father and mother. At any rate, we know that John Wesley, at the time when his mind was becoming very serious on religious matters at Christ Church, used it, and not unlikely also at Lincoln; and it had no little influence in shaping that inward view of religion, that sense of the intimate relationship between the soul and God which mellowed until it reached full maturity and explicitness in the meeting in Aldergate Street on May 24, 1738, and which really forms a new epoch in the religious history of England. The period when Scougal influenced Wesley was anterior to his great decision, but not the less must it have helped toward it, for in spiritual growth it is always true that what comes after has an organic relationship to what goes before—that progress comes through development, and not through any breach of continuity. Scougal's ideas and words left an indelible impression on Wesley's mind, and the following words, written by him in 1734, embodying the aim of the revival of religion in which he discharged such an important part, reflect both. "Religion," he said, "is not the bare saying over

so many prayers, morning and evening, in public or in private; not anything superadded now and then to a careless or worldly life: but a constant ruling habit of the soul; a renewal of our minds in the image of God; a recovery of the divine likeness; a still-increasing conformity of heart and life to the pattern of our most holy Redeemer." [1]

Again, with regard to reading, Wesley wrote: "I intend to spend my uncertain remainder of time in studying only what makes for the moral improvement of my mind, and the regulation of my life. More particularly I shall apply myself to read such books as are persuasive rather than instructive: such as warm, kindle, and enlarge the affections, and awaken the divine sense in the soul — being convinced, by every day's experience, that I have more need of heat than light; though were I for more light, still I think the love of God is the best light of the soul of man." [2]

The lingering influence of Scougal's thought and diction, assimilated into the inner life, and vividly retained in memory, may be felt in such

[1] Tyerman's Oxford Methodists, p. 19.

[2] Tyerman's Life and Times of Wesley, vol. i. p. 368.

words, as well as in the verse with which, in January 1738, Wesley expressed the desire of his life :—

"O grant that nothing in my soul
May dwell but Thy pure love alone !
O may Thy love possess me whole,
My joy, my treasure, and my crown :
Strange flames far from my heart remove !
My very act, thought, word be love."[1]

It is to be acknowledged that it is chiefly in the formative period of the Holy Club at Oxford that Scougal's influence is most to be perceived, and as an example of it, let the following scheme of self-examination, to which the young men agreed, and which they constantly used, be considered. It gives a striking view of the spirit and aims that governed it. The scheme was drawn up at the time, when John Wesley was Moderator of the society.

Sunday.—Love of God and Simplicity : Means of which are Prayer and Meditation.

1. Have I been simple and recollected in everything I said or did? Have I (1) been simple in everything, that is, looked upon God, my Good, my Pattern, my one Desire, my Disposer, Parent of Good : acted wholly for Him ; bounded my views with the present action or

[1] Diary, vol. iii. p. 206.

hour? (2) Recollected?—that is, has this simple view been distinct and uninterrupted? Have I, in order to keep it so, used the signs agreed upon with my friends, wherever I was? Have I done anything without a previous perception of its being the will of God, or without a perception of its being an exercise, or a means of the virtue of the day? Have I said anything without it?

2. Have I prayed with fervour? at going in and out of the church? morning and evening in private? Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, with my friends, at rising? . . . Have I paused before I concluded in His name, and adverted to my Saviour now interceding for me at the right hand of God, and offering up these prayers?

3. . . . Have I every hour prayed for humility, faith, hope, love, and the particular virtue of the day? . . .

4. Have I duly prayed for the virtue of the day?—that is, have I prayed for it at going out and coming in—deliberately, seriously, fervently?

6. Have I duly meditated? . . .

Monday.—Love of Man.

1. Have I been zealous to do, and active in doing, good? . . . (8) Have I in speaking to a stranger explained what religion is not? (not negative, not external) and what it is? (a recovery of the image of God;)—searched at what step in it he stops, and what makes him stop there? exhorted and directed him? (9) Have I persuaded all I could to attend public prayers, sermons,

and sacraments, and in general to obey the laws of the Church catholic, the Church of England, the State, the University, and their respective colleges? (10) Have I, when taxed with any act of obedience, avowed it, and turned the attack with sweetness and firmness? (11) Have I disputed upon any practical point, unless it was to be practised just then? . . .

2. Have I rejoiced with and for my neighbour in virtue or pleasure? grieved with him in pain, for him in sin?

3. Have I received his infirmities with pity, not anger?

4. Have I thought or spoken unkindly of or to him? have I revealed any evil of any one, unless it was necessary to some particular good I had in view? Have I then done it with all the tenderness of phrase and manner consistent with that end? Have I any way appeared to approve them that did otherwise?

5. Has good-will been, and appeared to be, the spring of all my actions towards others?

6. Have I daily used intercession? (1) Before. (2) After speaking to any? (3) For my friends on Sunday? (4) For my pupils on Monday? (5) For those who have particularly desired it, on Wednesday and Friday? (6) For the family in which I am, every day?[1]

Surely here, if anywhere in this world, the principles of religion as a "divine life in the soul of

[1] Jackon's Life of Charles Wesley, vol. i. pp. 27-29.

man" were rigidly observed, and their spirit accurately interpreted.

Take again the rules, drawn up by John and Charles Wesley in 1752 for their preachers, when misunderstanding was aroused, and opposition created:—

It is agreed by us, whose names are undersigned—

I. That we will not listen, or willingly inquire after, any ill concerning each other.

II. That if we do hear any ill of each other, we will not be forward to believe it.

III. That as soon as possible we will communicate what we hear, by speaking or writing, to the person concerned.

IV. That till we have done this we will not write or speak a syllable of it, to any other person whatsoever.

V. That neither will we mention it after we have done this to any other person.

VI. That we will not make any exception to any of these rules unless we think ourselves absolutely obliged in conscience so to do.[1]

It is not too much to claim that here again the early principles which Wesley received through Scougal are again interpreted and applied to the position of his preachers. An interesting study is to

[1] Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, vol. ii. p. 576.

compare these rules with Scougal's sermon (No. II.) on "the indispensable duty of loving our enemies" [1] —and the recognition of the early influence, assimilated and made potent by a fine spiritual genius, does not in the remotest degree lessen its splendour. On the contrary, it shows that this great Christian saint, preacher, organiser, and statesman grew as other men, and that one of the tributaries that nourished his spiritual development was the Scottish professor. Scougal's book supplied the basis of religious experience for which Wesley throughout his honoured ministry so efficiently contended; and although other elements were emphasised in later years, still it is true to say that they were implicit in the dominant conception of religion found in 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man,' and Wesley's spiritual development made them explicit. No one can fail to observe, who is acquainted with his spiritual development, that, like Luther's and Chalmers's, it was the result of a long struggle, but that struggle was an evolution and not a revolution,—what afterwards became explicit was from the first implicit,—and the growth was along the line of the expanding divine life within the soul. Surely it is an honour to this Scottish teacher, that with

[1] Cf. pp. 87, 88; also pp. 76, 81, 84 in text.

Thomas à Kempis and other such spiritual powers he was enabled to help in the religious development of one who was a religious creator like Luther—who changed the religious life of England —whose movement became a power within all the Churches, and powerfully affected religion in America. The latest tribute to his spiritual power avers: "England, as a whole, is as truly interested in Wesley as in Shakespeare; and it may well be doubted whether in the long course of her history any one person has ever influenced her life in so direct, palpable, and powerful a way as has John Wesley. . . . As Rousseau aroused Europe from dead beliefs to living ideas, so did Wesley rouse England from death in 'trespasses and sins' to a new life of divine possibilities. . . . We owe it largely to the Methodist movement that, while the French could only renew their outworn structure by violent revolution, the English could transform theirs by peaceable means. Yet Wesley was no quietist, no retiring ascetic. He faced the evils of his time as boldly as Savonarola. . . . We also cannot fail to connect Wesley's movement with that later Oxford movement, so different in many ways but yet like it, a part of that great spiritual uprising against the tyranny of the world and the things of sense. . . . If

we regard these diverse movements as phases of the spiritual life of England, out of which all manner of noble growths (including the inevitable tares which spring up with the wheat) have come, enriching and enlarging our vast heritage, then we can trace back to Wesley in a supreme degree the source of this great and beneficent influence to which England owes so much. And the movement in its main issue and character has largely expressed the nature of its founder. We have our fanaticisms and our ridiculous sects, as Voltaire told us in those days of brilliant sceptical criticism before Wesley's career began; but the same religious belief in the main holds the nation as it held Wesley himself. He was a man of culture as well as a man of piety: while burning with zeal for his fellow-men, he was never vain, egotistic, or blundering. He carried into his religion a fine instinct for the 'minor moralities of life.' . . . We associate Wesley with 'sound learning' as well as 'religious education,' and we recognise that his genius for organisation was as remarkable as his genius for piety. His memorable mission to America showed that spirit in him which justifies his saying that the world was his parish. May the country which bore him and the University which reared him give us in the coming century such

another religious leader to aid us, in the spirit of sobriety and truth, in the eternal contest with the evils and sins which grow like weeds in our human soil." [1]

Such is a worthy testimony to Wesley's genius and work; but as the mighty river is fed in its beginning from the mountain rill or the stream far up and hid among the moorlands, so Wesley's great spiritual nature received impulse and help from the teaching and example of the Scottish teacher and saint. Surely it is worthy to recall this little stream, where the great man drank in early years, as from a crystal fountain, the waters of eternal life.

In this respect it is not uninteresting to recall that Wesley was both a writer of books and an editor of literature; and it may be taken as a tribute of his personal gratitude that he published an edition of Scougal's 'Life of God in the Soul of Man,' [2] with a preface. I could not discover the year in which it first appeared under his editorship,

[1] Wesley's Services to England: the 'Spectator,' July 15, 1899, pp. 81, 82.

[2] A French translation of this book appeared at The Hague in 1727. Dr Thomas Chalmers also edited it, and Bishop Jebb of Limerick includes it among his list of "piety without asceticism." In a letter it is described as "that beautiful epitome of revealed religion." (Correspondence between Bishop Jebb and A. Knox, Esq., vol. i. p. 139.)

for the British Museum copy bears the mark "third edition," and the date 1773. Wesley also published in his large "Christian Library" series several sermons of Scougal's, and these will be found in vol. xxiii. pp. 325-456; and this was the literature with which he nourished the spiritual life of his societies. To have received an imprimatur along with Leighton and Halyburton[1] from such a man was no small honour indeed, and no small testimony to the inherent worth of his teaching.

It seems established from the foregoing evidence as beyond doubt that during the early formative period of the religious society at Oxford, Scougal's 'Life of God in the Soul of Man,' with the sermons, were known to the Oxford Methodists and extensively used by all of them. Their influence over Charles Wesley, John Wesley, George Whitefield — the hymn-writer, the organiser, the preacher of the movement — was beyond question; and although from the letters and testimonies published in Mr Tyerman's volume, 'The Oxford Methodists,' it is impossible to gather direct reference from the other members to them, their general spirit is identical, and the books may safely be inferred to have been a fountain of light

[1] See Whitefield and Wesley in Scotland, p. 26, note.

and life to all of them. Influence is not the less real when it is assimilated as part and parcel of the spiritual life and acts unconsciously, and a rivulet in that mighty stream of religious earnestness that emanated from Oxford was assuredly the message of the Scottish teacher. It was embodied in the remarkable set of rules drawn up for the society by Wesley, and so it had no little power in controlling, shaping, and directing the religious aims of the whole society. The kind of life it helped to produce in George Whitefield, who gives the strongest testimony to its power, is best learned from the words of his fellow-student, James Hervey, who thus speaks of him in 1750: "Surely people do not know that amiable and exemplary man: or else, I cannot but think, instead of depreciating, they would applaud and love him. For my part, I never beheld so fair a copy of our Lord—such a living image of the Saviour—such exalted delight in God—such enlarged benevolence to man—such a steady faith in the divine promises—and such a fervent zeal for the divine glory: and all this without the least moroseness of humour or extravagance of behaviour; sweetened with the most engaging cheerfulness of temper, and regulated by all the sobriety of reason and wisdom of Scripture, insomuch that I cannot

forbear applying the wise man's encomium to this eminent minister of Christ, 'Many sons have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.'" [1]

Reference has thus been made to the influence of Scougal's teaching, but can it be doubted that far more potent was that of his life as realising that teaching? Truth embodied in a life is the most powerful of instruments, and no one can for a moment hesitate in averring that the life, as portrayed in the earlier parts of this narrative and founded upon the information of the literature that was well known to the Wesleys and their associates, must have impressed them all very deeply. Scougal in fact realised in a smaller and more limited sphere what they accomplished in a larger, and he was in a true sense their forerunner. If the true historical perspective be observed, and if it be recalled that both before and during the period when the Oxford Society was formed Scougal was the religious teacher best known to them, then it cannot be doubted that his example would be most helpful in guidance to them all — not least to the Wesleys. If his teaching brought them spiritual vision, his life brought them a brilliant example of saintliness, and, acting invisibly within the region of the

[1] Tyerman's Oxford Methodists, pp. 259, 260.

spirit as well as embodying the realisation of their own quests and aims, must have been most potent to beckon onwards and upwards. The type of religious character that shone in the Aberdeen professor, and that which shone in the Wesleys and their associates, was identical, and the first in time cannot have failed to attract and impress those who chose him as their guide. If Scougal's book was so influential, the personality of which it was an expression must have been more so; and one cannot study the formative period of these Oxford Methodists, catch their spirit, enter into their aims and strivings, without failing to see that the gifted and saintly Henry Scougal exercised over them, both by his teaching and his life, a power for which he has not had a sufficient acknowledgment. His memory passed away in the mighty spiritual force that he helped to originate, yet if it be true that he who first animates is the true creator, then the name of this short-lived but brilliant Aberdeen professsor ought to have an honourable place amid the honoured names of the religious leaders of this country.

CHAPTER IX.

SCOTTISH RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES. WAS SCOUGAL'S RELIGIOUS SOCIETY AT ABERDEEN THE PROTOTYPE OF THE OXFORD ONE?

Religious societies have discharged an important part in Church history—a part which has not always had a sufficient acknowledgment given to it. They were managed by the people for the people, and were at one and the same time the expression and the sustaining power of the religious life at the heart of the people. They had never an ecclesiastical, but always a purely religious, origin; and in the dark days of the Church these religious or prayer societies exercised no unimportant influence in keeping alive the religious ideal, vision, and faith. The few that met together, here and there over the country, seriously concerned about the things

that belong to God and the peace of the soul—that sought to quicken piety and make their walk closer with God—that endeavoured to help their brothers around by bringing them to the same centre of repose, and brightening time and eternity with the light of an immortal hope—were really the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." When theological wrangling dishonoured God, and ecclesiastical strife lessened His glory, these religious societies were witnesses for personal religion, and for the life that is hid with Christ in God. In medieval times the "Reformers before the Reformation" did their most important work through these societies, and by them they leavened the minds of the people. The followers of Wycliffe, and the Lollards of Kyle, did their best work through such societies, and by them they kept the religious light from being extinguished by the corruption and superstition of the period. It was in these societies that the reformed spirit was fostered, and apart from them it is very questionable if the Reformers could have carried the people so extensively with them. Even after the separation of the Reformed Church from the Church of Rome was made, the people were educated in the doctrine of the Reformed Church by means of these

religious societies, conducted by Christian laymen for the people: references are made to them throughout Knox's 'History of the Scottish Reformation.' Luther established them throughout Germany, and his idea regarding them was that all individuals who were Christians in earnest, and were willing to confess the Gospel, should enrol themselves by name, and meet together for prayer, for reading the Scriptures, for administering the sacraments, and for exercising works of Christian piety. For assemblies of this kind, which existed purely for the satisfaction of spiritual requirements in an evangelical sense, Luther contemplated no elaborate form of liturgy, but, on the contrary, simply a "short and proper" means of "directing all in common to the Word and prayer and charity," and in addition thereto, a regular exercise of congregational discipline, and a Christian care for the poor, after the example of the apostles.[1]

These societies were most helpful in advancing the interests of the Reformed religion; and while Church statesmen moulded the ecclesiastical policy through Synods and Presbyteries and Assemblies, such societies helped what is far more important—the spiritual life of the people. They were centres

[1] Köstlin's Life of Luther, p. 296.

of spiritual light and life, and as the kingdom of God cometh without observation, their true history cannot be recorded in detail, but lives in the spiritual results which they brought about, and as a stream of spiritual life in the hearts of the people.

In Scotland, especially, these religious or praying societies were a strong spiritual force: they were chiefly connected with Presbytery, and had no little influence in maintaining it as a form of Church government among the people. They existed from before the Reformation, and had a continuous history after it. During the Covenant periods they were to be found over the greater part of Scotland, and maintained ordinances in the way the majority of the Scottish people desired them. They were throughout their history witnesses for the revival of religion, and were everywhere homes of piety. The Revolution Settlement brought peace to the persecuted Church of Scotland, but it was by no means the return of the Golden Age for the Church. This period of compromise brought its chilling breath, and the refusal of the Cameronian remnant to accept it, with their final withdrawal, led to the reign of Moderatism, with its lifeless morality, as a substitute for the Evangel of Christ. Moderatism is a dark period in the history of the

Scottish Church, and, with an enforced patronage, was the source of all its troubles, and the cause of all its secessions. It brought a chill to the strong piety of the country; it stifled the religious aspirations of the people, and spiritual life driven out from one place must appear in another, for the spiritual nature of man is eternal and will assert itself. "The light of an active religion is always burning somewhere, but the inevitable tendency is for that light to die away in one place and reappear in another."[1] And that spiritual light which largely disappeared in the Church appeared in the praying societies, that were chiefly situated in the Lowlands and in midland Scotland. There were many faithful clergy in the Church who were true to Christ's Evangel, and their parishes were centres of light and life; but where these were not, the praying societies did most efficient and helpful work; they were witnesses and sustainers of personal piety, and represented it often amid contempt and obloquy. The religious history of Scotland is not to be understood, in the eighteenth century especially, unless these are taken into account as efficient factors in the life of the Scottish

[1] 'Spectator,' July 15, 1899, p. 80.

people; and the historian of the future, if he is to be true and not blinded to the facts of the case, must give prominence to them as centres of religious light and as helps to earnest souls. The following description of them has been recently given: "A lonely thatched cottage on the moor, reached by miry roads and uncertain paths — the long trudge through the darkness, with hearts lifted up at the sight of distant yellow light which marked their destination—the grizzled men, bowed with the weariness of unending labour, and the strong, silent women, still wearing the plaids which had sheltered them from the rawness of the night air—the humble furniture, and the dim light of the cottage, and the reverence which sat on every face, and showed itself at every word and in every gesture. When they met they hardly greeted, and when they parted it was with the driest words of farewell. For strangers they would have even a scantier welcome. They had not met for social amenities. The business which had brought them from distant homes was prayer, and the searching of Scripture, and the discussion of the points of pure doctrine. Their theology was Calvinism, tempered by the tenderness of the theology of the Marrow, and

their aim was personal holiness."[1] Such is the testimony of one who has made a special study of the Lowland praying societies, and it is such as brings these earnest Scottish people before us in the fulness of life.

The members of these societies were loyal to the Church of Scotland, and it was only at the time when they felt that Moderatism was not helpful to their spiritual life, and that patronage deprived them of the right of appointing those whom they desired to minister unto them in holy things, that many of them joined the Erskines and their followers as spiritual guides. "The Secession Church could not have come into existence had it not been that the task of organising congregations had already been practically accomplished." Such became for many their ultimate goal; and while the Church of the Erskines aroused a strong evangelical spirit apart from the Church of Scotland, and without which the religious life of Scotland would have been infinitely poorer, the Evangelical party within the Church of Scotland, headed by Dr Erskine of Edinburgh, was powerfully helped by those societies that remained loyal as *ecclesiolæ* in *ecclesia*, and by

[1] Professor Davidson in the 'United Presbyterian Magazine,' June 1899, p. 252.

the great revival of religion produced through the preaching of Whitefield and Wesley within the pulpits of the Scottish Church.[1]

These mutual improvement societies for spiritual purposes, exercising a supervision and control over the life and conduct of their members — guided occasionally by rules not dissimilar, in the main, from those which Wesley gave to his societies — were as leaven over the country, and form a chapter in Scottish Church history that has not had sufficient attention given to it. The Societies increased personal piety both in the individual and in the home, and maintained much of the earnestness of the covenant period. Whatever be our ecclesiastical bias, it is only honourable to bear testimony to the noble work done by the men of these prayer-societies, and to recognise in them a true branch of the Church of Christ. One can apply to them the words that the late Principal Cairns applied to the work of the Sunday-school teacher: "Whenever I see a young man teaching the Gospel to half-a-dozen children, I recognise a living branch of the Church of Christ."[2] One can also apply to them the words of John Craig of

[1] See Whitefield and Wesley in Scotland.

[2] Dr MacEwen's Life of Principal Cairns, p. 588.

the Canongate to Queen Mary's secretary, Maitland of Lethington, when presenting to him the Apology of Magdeburg, and desiring him to read the names of the ministers who had subscribed the defence of that town to be a most just defence, and added, "To resist a tyrant is not to resist God, nor yet His ordinances." When Maitland read it, he wrote "Homines obscuri" ("men of no note"); John Craig answered, "Dei tamen servi" ("Nevertheless, servants of God").[1] The members of these praying societies were assuredly "obscure men," but they were not the less "servants of God."

It may be argued that the encouragement of such societies in connection with the Church, and meeting apart from church hours, conducted by the people for the people, would be a most efficient help to the Church everywhere. Especially in Scotland, where Presbytery brings prominently to the front the truth of the universal priesthood of the Christian people, these societies would be of great service in creating and sustaining the religious life. To meet for prayer, and for the purpose of inspiring each other to being good and doing good, are objects that commend themselves to all. Such societies would call into active service the spiritual force among the

[1] Dr Laing's Works of John Knox, vol. ii. pp. 453, 454.

laity that is often so dormant, because it has no definite object to expend itself on; it would help to make those who were not Christians, Christians, and those who were Christians, better Christians. What a good would ensue to the Church, and what an army of Church workers along the line of the daily vocations of life would be created, if the old Scottish prayer-societies were restored throughout the country—if they were to meet for prayer and reading of the Scriptures at stated intervals, while a definite practical scheme of work were added thereto, such as is being carried on in the Church of England by the new "Brotherhood of Saint Andrew," that emphasises the responsibility of every Christian for his godless neighbour, and asks him to make an effort each week to bring such nearer God, and to offer a prayer each day that the effort may be successful! Such work is quiet, solid doing good, brings forward the redemptive ideal of Christianity, and seeks by prayer and effort to help and restore. Such societies, connected with all the Churches, would commend themselves by the absence of a cumbrous organisation—by the presence of the Christian ideal of life as a living force in congregational work—and would centre the energies of Christian people on a grand object. Such societies

would bring forward the true conception of the Christian Church as a great brotherhood, existing to be good and to do good, after the manner of Christ Himself; such societies would banish sacerdotalism, lessen unreasonable dogmatism, and bring prominently forward the ideal of the Church as a spiritual and beneficent brotherhood in Christ. They would by the force created solve more than half of our great modern problems, and bring to bear upon the social sores the healing balm of Christian love. In doing so, they would be true to an honourable past, and would adapt an old message to new and pressing needs. Fostered and guided by the Church, they would most efficiently help the Church, and give a definite object to the Christian spirit which it produces from week to week.

As has just been stated, these religious or prayer societies were extensively scattered over Scotland from before the Reformation period, and were centres of light and life to the people: there may also have been such at the universities — at any rate, the record of Henry Scougal's life seems to show that he either formed one such at King's College, Aberdeen, in connection with the preparation for graduation, or found one there in

existence of which he became president, both in his student and regent days, during the period at least when he was professor of philosophy, and most probably when he was professor of divinity. The evidence has already been quoted, but it may here be repeated. Says Dr Gairden, his biographer: "Religion was the matter of his [Scougal's] serious and impartial choice, and not merely the prejudice of custom and education. He used sometimes to write essays of morality, and occasional meditations; which, as they were singularly elegant and ingenious, so they breathed forth the devotion of his mind and the seriousness of his spirit, and would very well become a riper age. It being the custom of the youth to have private meetings [1] about the ordering the concerns of their commencements, where he [Scougal] *was made constant president among his fellows*, his discourses to them were so grave and becoming (as some of them have professed), that they looked upon them as the sayings of a grey head, and thought they savoured of the wisdom of a senator." [2]

Examples of such addresses are to be found in

[1] The meetings were both academical and religious, see p. 13 (note).

[2] P. 337.

a previous chapter,[1] and probably contained the substance of what appeared afterwards as 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man,' and how deeply these must have influenced the members can well be estimated from the contents. But just now we have to consider this work of Scougal's in connection with the origin of the similar society at Oxford; and if a true historical perspective be maintained, and it be recalled that just at the period, and before it, when the Oxford club was formed, Scougal was a favourite religious author of the Wesleys, and his saintly life, work, and religious society at King's College, Aberdeen, were all familiarly known to them through the evidence brought forward in the previous chapters, then is it not more than possible—is it not most probable—that the very suggestion of the society at Oxford may have come to Charles Wesley through Henry Scougal?

It is also to be recalled that John Wesley is not, strictly speaking, the founder of anything connected with his name—he was pre-eminently the inspirer organiser, and saint; and if George Whitefield originated field-preaching, Charles Wesley was the founder of the Oxford Methodist Club. John Wes-

[1] Chap. vi.

ley himself invariably dates the commencement of Methodism from 1729, not from 1739.[1] Charles Wesley was the founder of the club, when his brother, John Wesley, was at Epworth; and if we again recall that he was profoundly influenced by Scougal's book—that he believed in it so much as to give it to George Whitefield when he was in religious doubt; that it was a constant companion of his throughout this formative period of his life; that Scougal's example, as a young saint, inspired with the loftiest ideal, shaped him, — then what more natural or probable than that the society over which Scougal was president for years at Aberdeen should suggest to his mind the idea of a similar society at Oxford, and that the Aberdeen society is after all the prototype of the Oxford club in its early form? If Charles Wesley was influenced by Scougal's teaching and life, if, as the son of an English rector, he was drawn to him by the additional fact that Scougal was in the Scottish Church when that Church had an Episcopal form of government,—what could come as a more natural consequence than that he should find from Scougal's life the very idea for which he was in quest, and that as a result of it he should seek the help of

[1] Overton's Life, p. 24

fellowship in the realisation of his endeavour? Charles Wesley founded the club at Oxford; John Wesley, on his return from Epworth, found it in existence, and, with his strong genius for godliness, was made its president; both were at the time disciples of Scougal, and, taking all the evidence of the case into consideration, it seems to be a very probable inference that, both in spirit and conception, the Oxford club owes its inspiration to Henry Scougal, and that the early origin of Methodism is to be found in the northern university town. Scougal inspired it, but Leighton's honoured name must also be recalled in connection with Scougal, who was his pupil; and so the early impulse of Oxford Methodism, and of the great Church and religious revival which it afterwards created, moving ever since as a mighty spiritual stream gladdening the City of God, is to be traced to Scotland, through one of the saintliest of her sons. It is no small honour to this northern saint that he helped to animate such a movement; and while we deplore his short life, we must rejoice over its far-reaching results: we worship the God whose instrument he was, and by whose blessing he achieved so much.

CHAPTER X.

ESTIMATES AND TESTIMONIES FROM EMINENT MEN AS TO HIS INFLUENCE.

Whether the foregoing conclusion be accepted or not, the lesson of the life cannot be doubted—the message cannot be overlooked: and it is this, that those who tell most potently on the spiritual life of the Church are the prophets and saints. Church courts knew Scougal but little: his study, and the Mount of Communion with God, knew him much. What made him as he was, and as he influenced others, was his inner life of deep experience of God, of aspiration, of meditation, of beneficent aim, of prayer. His was a life that had the roots of its being in God—that knew God not by the hearing of the ear, but by the experience of the heart—that realised religion as a life in God—that made daily

work a walk with God—that was in the world and yet not of the world—that united learning with piety, and piety with religion—that was rooted and grounded in the love of God; and the message and example of that life became to great and humble souls alike the fountain-light of all their day, the master-light of all their seeing. Across the gulf of over two centuries both speak still: the form is still radiant, the eyes have not lost their glow, nor the message its power; they are full of life yet. If this little book will direct any to such pastures by the quiet waters, it will not have been written in vain.

Scougal combines piety with learning, and speaks not least of all to divinity students. Why should there not be still in all the universities such religious societies as those that Henry Scougal presided over at Aberdeen, and the Wesleys founded at Oxford? Surely their results are beyond any manner of question, for they reared great scholars who were great saints, and history abundantly declares their far-reaching results on the life of the country. Who can doubt their influence, since God has so visibly blessed their results, since God Himself inspired the consciousness that made them victorious over all opposition, and was their guiding spirit—

"the best of all is, God is with us"? God strikes down the workers, but carries on His work; and how potently could that work be helped by such societies, both in the universities and in all the Churches, guided by aims like those in Scougal's time at Aberdeen, and in the Wesleys' time at Oxford?

If ever we are to be raised above the things that divide and separate Churches, which ought all to be one, even as God and Christ are one; if ever we are to abolish all the barriers that come from the divisions of the past; if ever all the disciples of the Lord Jesus are to be one in heart and mind,—then it must be by a centring of the spiritual life on the great things of the kingdom of God—on righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost. All differences disappear at the centre; all radii that from the outward circumference seem parallel converge there: and if such aims can best be realised by methods such as these saints of the Church devised to make religion a life of thought, feeling, piety, action in God and with God, then surely the message of their lives should not be in vain. Such streams began at the universities, but did not end there in the past; and the message of the past ought to be the hope of the present, and the certainty of the future. And in an age when so much is ques-

tioned, it is well to recall that there are permanent elements in religion that are above all question, and that the life of God in the soul of man is one of such. It rests on the spiritual order of the world, and comes from the law that God in creating the soul, stamped upon it His own image, that it might be for Himself. Can it be possible to recall the examples of Henry Scougal, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, James Hervey, and doubt the power of such religious societies in the university life of the past? May the message of the past be the guidance of the present and the future!

Piety is eternal, and as it speaks to us from the religious classics of the Church, never fails to find the heart young, and to keep it so. What the age needs is not more speculative knowledge of God, but more of a known, felt life in God. Scougal as a religious teacher must always be read, for his message rests upon the eternal. His 'Life of God in the Soul of Man' was edited[1] by Wesley, by Chalmers, by Bishop Burnet, and commended by

[1] A recent edition has been issued by a society of the Church of England, and another by Professor Cooper, D.D., with an account of the life and writings of the author, his morning and evening service for the cathedral church of Aberdeen, and a portrait.

Principal Wishart of Edinburgh and Bishop Jebb; it was translated into French, and no doubt helped many an earnest soul in France and elsewhere. It has thus appealed to minds of diverse hues; it has appealed to all classes and creeds; it has helped many who do not accept what others hold so dear. The Rev. James Walker, D.D., LL.D., a distinguished Unitarian minister, and in his last years President of the Harvard College, thus spoke of it: "When a young man comes to me to ask my advice on entering the ministry, I always tell him that if he enjoys reading Scougal's 'Life of God in the Soul of Man' and other books of like character, he may do so, *but that must be the test.*"[1] Thus Scougal's book has appealed to minds theologically wide apart, and to thousands from different communions who found in it light and help. Such is, surely, a vindication of a life that transcended all dividing barriers, and attained a region which reconciled them. Such a life appeals to all men still, for a revelation of the God-like arouses the deepest in man, and is true to the latent best in all men.

[1] I am indebted for this interesting reference to the Rev. Dr John Hunter of Glasgow.

In the 'Calendar of Ancient Scottish Saints' we find it as a remarkable fact that the saints of the early Celtic Church were not reverenced because they were martyrs, but simply because they were founders of churches and faithful teachers of Christianity.[1] Their life and work evoked the admiration of their contemporaries, and were gratefully commemorated by the names given to the religious centres they had planted. Many of the place-names of the country have thus both a historical and religious significance, and are charged with the memories of holy lives, and piety has even stamped itself on the ordinary speech of daily life, which is unconsciously used by us who forget its early significance. When we find in the ordinary names of places a "kil" followed by a proper name, we may safely infer that it preserves the record of a holy life.[2] Such was the gratitude of the distant past; and although

[1] Dr Joseph Anderson's 'Scotland in Early Christian Times,' first series, p. 190.

[2] *E.g.*, Kilbride means the church of St Bride; Kilbirnie, the church of St Birnan; Kilwinning, St Finan's church; Kirkcolm, St Columba's church; Kilninian, the church of Nennidius. (See Sir Herbert Maxwell's Scottish Land-Names, pp. 204, 205.)

it may take a different form in the present hour, surely the name of Henry Scougal of Aberdeen ought to be recalled with reverence, and honoured by the Church of Scotland as one of the greatest among its many honoured teachers who have led men onwards to better things.

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